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THE MILITANT

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INSIDE

Panama court gives light sentence to CIA-trained, anti-Cuba mass murderer

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Israeli tanks invade Gaza

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Continuing Tel Aviv's drive to deal demoralizing blows to Palestinians resisting occupation, the Israeli armed forces invaded Beit Lahiya in the Gaza Strip April 20–21, sending a column of 25 tanks backed by helicopter gunships into the town of 4,000. At least 10 Palestinians, among them two girls under 10 years old, were killed by heavy machine gun fire, reported the Palestine Media Center. Over the several-day assault, bulldozers destroyed homes and uprooted trees, while Israeli troops went house to house, claiming to be hunting down the source of an April 18 rocket attack in which several settlers and soldiers were lightly wounded.

On April 22, an Israeli armored column destroyed 13 homes in a second Gaza city, Rafah. In the West Bank, armored vehicles and helicopter gunships laid siege to a house in Tulkarm before troops broke in and shot dead the alleged local leader and two members of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, a group affiliated with the Fatah organization of Palestinian Authority (PA) president Yasir Arafat. Three other brigade members were killed two days later in a raid in Jenin. Israeli officers claimed those they killed were preparing a suicide attack inside Israel.

Taking a step the Palestinian leadership had resisted up till now, on April 22 Arafat instructed 20 members of the brigade to vacate the Ramallah headquarters of the PA in an attempt to deprive Israeli officials of a pretext to attack the compound. In an interview broadcast the next day, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said that in his re-

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Mass march in D.C. backs women's right to choose

Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Turnout was massive for April 25 march in Washington, D.C., to support a woman's right to choose abortion.

BY LAURA GARZA AND SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—From early morning young women and men streamed in by the hundreds of thousands here on April 25, filling the mall between the Capitol and the Washington Monument. By the time they started marching in the early afternoon, they had made the March for Women's Lives the largest-ever demonstration in this country to support women's right to choose abortion.

Most experienced observers said the march approached one million. It was so large, however, that there was no way to know for sure. But most didn't care. Its massive character and spirit spoke for itself.

Wearing T-shirts with slogans such as "Stand Up for Choice" or "March for Women's Lives," demonstrators came on buses from Maine to Michigan and Colorado. Several thousand came on planes from as far as Florida, Washington state, and California. Many came by train, like the one chartered by sponsoring groups, which started in Boston and picked up demonstrators in New York, New Jersey, and elsewhere on the way to the U.S. capital.

"I believe women's reproductive rights are being threatened," said Tana Forrester, 20, a student at Northeastern University, who was making a sign with schoolmate

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U.S. high court hears appeal of prisoners held without charges at Guantánamo

BY DOUG NELSON

On April 20 the U.S. Supreme Court began to hear appeals on behalf of some of the nearly 600 men imprisoned on the U.S. Naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Labeling them "enemy combatants," the U.S. government claims it can hold them indefinitely without charges or basic legal guarantees. Many have been locked up for more than two years.

The first prisoners were seized in Afghanistan in January 2002 and taken to Guantánamo, blindfolded and shackled. A number of men were abducted in other countries such as Bosnia. The prison camp, called Camp Delta, now includes residents of 44 countries. U.S. officials rationalize the kidnappings by labeling the men "Al-Qaeda suspects" and "terrorists."

Families of prisoners in Australia, United Kingdom, and Sweden have been demanding to have the prisoners returned. At the same time, the British and Australian governments, in particular, have backed Washington fully in its "war on terror."

The Australian government, which criticized Madrid for withdrawing Spanish troops from Iraq, has also sided with the U.S. government on the Guantánamo detentions. Australian prime minister John Howard said recently he is satisfied that David Hicks—one of the two Australians held at Guantánamo who may soon face a military tribunal—will not have his rights

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Florida garment workers at Point Blank win union recognition, first contract

Militant/Nicole Sarmiento

Garment workers at Point Blank in Oakland Park, Florida, outside plant July 18, 2003, celebrate labor board ruling granting back pay to fired union militants.

BY ERIC SIMPSON AND SETH GALINSKY

OAKLAND PARK, Florida—"They said they would never allow the union here, that they'd rather die," said Judith Calderón, a sewing machine operator at Point Blank Body Armor. "Well, we won. The biggest initial accomplishment is gaining respect. Now we can speak, we can get together and talk. We have better treatment."

Calderón was describing a major victory for workers here. Point Blank, one of the largest garment manufacturers in the state, producing bullet-proof vests for the Army and police, agreed to recognize the UNITE union at its Oakland Park plant, one of the company's three facilities in south Florida. Oakland Park is in Broward County, just north of Ft. Lauderdale. After a struggle that lasted more than two years, the company threw in the towel and signed its first

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Panama court gives light sentence to anti-Cuba bomber

BY RÓGER CALERO

On April 20 a court in Panama sentenced notorious CIA-trained bomber Luis Posada Carriles and four other Cuban counterrevolutionaries who had been accused of planning the assassination of Cuban president Fidel Castro during the 2000 Ibero-American Summit.

Posada Carriles is also wanted in Cuba for his involvement in the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner over Barbados that killed all 73 persons aboard, as well as a deadly string of bombings in Havana in 1997.

The ultrarightists, who were arrested in Panama City in November 2000 with 33 pounds of explosives, were convicted on charges of endangering public safety. Posada Carriles and another Cuban rightist were sentenced to eight years; the others received seven years. Posada Carriles's Panamanian driver was given four years as an accomplice.

The Cuban government, which for the past three years has sought their extradition to bring them to justice in Cuba, criticized the sentences. "The penalties imposed do not correspond to the gravity of the acts committed," the Cuban foreign ministry said in a statement.

The five men were arrested by Panamanian security forces after Cuban officials, on the eve of the summit meeting, denounced the presence in that country of counterrevolutionaries who have been involved in numerous attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro. The Panamanian government carried out the arrests only after Cuban officials announced they had provided it with the addresses, phone numbers, and other information about the five men.

Cuban officials reported that the ultrarightists had been planning to set off explosives in the middle of a public meeting at the University of Panama where Fidel Castro was invited to speak.

In an April 21 statement, the Cuban foreign ministry called the sentencing the culmination of a period plagued by irregularities, constant escape plans, and attempts to rig the trial in order to absolve the ultrarightists.

The court convicted the defendants on lesser charges and acquitted them of the most serious accusation, possession of explosives and attempted murder, "because no detonators were found in the area where the attack was supposed to be carried out," the Reuters news agency reported.

Posada Carriles has a long history of carrying out violent activity against the Cuban Revolution with U.S. government complicity. In 1961 he was part of the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs, which was quickly crushed by Cuban workers and farmers. Afterward, according to his own account in a 1998 *New York Times* interview, the CIA recruited Posada Carriles to carry out assassination attempts against Cuban leaders and other violent attacks.

In the 1970s he worked as chief of operations for the Venezuelan secret police. Arrested and convicted in Venezuela for the murderous 1976 Cuban airline bombing, Posada Carriles was allowed to escape from prison in 1985. He then worked closely with Lt. Col. Oliver North and other U.S. officials in supply operations for the U.S.-organized contra war against the Nicaraguan revolution. In the *Times* interview he bragged about his involvement in a series of 1997 bombings in Havana, including one at a hotel that killed an Italian tourist.

Posada Carriles's accomplices have a similar record. Gaspar Jiménez previously served time for the attempted kidnapping and murder of Cuban diplomats in Mexico. Guillermo Novo was convicted in the 1976 assassination in Washington, D.C., of former Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier, but his conviction was overturned on appeal. Pedro Remón served time for the attempted murder of Cuba's delegate to the United Nations in 1979.

Transport workers and peasants protest price hikes, paralyze Bolivian cities

Getty Images/AFP/Alzar Raldes

A one-day transportation strike in Bolivia backed by the country's main trade union federation shut down the capital and other cities on April 22, part of a series of protests by workers, farmers, and students against the policies of President Carlos Mesa. More than 100 unions and other organizations backed the action by the transport workers and thousands took to the streets in rallies against rising fuel prices, price-gouging "middlemen" who supply the fuel, and the government's moves to sign a deal with Argentina for Bolivia's natural gas.

The strike, supported by the Bolivian Workers Federation (COB), coincided with student demonstrations that mobilized more than 10,000 university students and teachers into the streets demanding an increase in spending for education. Peasants have organized protests over Mesa's refusal to implement demands of rural toilers for land and government assistance.

Last year, President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, a U.S.-backed mining tycoon, confronted an eruption of worker and peasant protests sparked by the government's moves to sell off Bolivia's natural gas reserves—the largest in Latin America. The protests spread after the regime called on the police to assault the demonstrations, leaving 80 dead. Sánchez de Lozada was forced to resign and Mesa, then the vice president, took his place. The new president has not fundamentally broken from the policies of his predecessor.

The U.S. embassy, which publicly backed Sánchez de Lozada even after his police slaughtered dozens of protesters, issued a statement declaring its support for Mesa's administration "to the end of its tenure in August 2007."

—PAUL PEDERSON

Targets of U.S. gov't spying contest 'no-fly' list in court

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit on behalf of seven U.S. citizens whose names appear on the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) "no-fly" list. Since November 2001 the TSA has distributed the list to all airlines with instructions to stop or conduct extra searches of those on it.

ACLU attorney Reginald Shuford said the case is about individuals "who found out that their government considers them potential terrorists." In addition to the delays and harassment they face when they attempt to board a flight, they "have no idea why they have been placed on the No-Fly list and no way to clear their names," said Shuford. Even after obtaining letters from the TSA confirming their identity they continue to be stopped, searched, and interrogated.

In April 6 press conferences in Seattle, St. Louis, and Washington, D.C., the ACLU announced its decision to file suit against the Department of Homeland Security and the TSA. The plaintiffs in the suit include a master sergeant in the U.S Air Force; a 74-year-old retired Presbyterian minister; a coordinator for the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia; a student in Vermont, and three lawyers, two of whom are on the ACLU staff.

Plaintiff and civil liberties attorney David Fathi suspects the reason he is on the list is that his surname in Iranian. The harassment and interrogations occur not only when he attempts to board a flight, said Fathi, but he recently he was "threatened by customs officials with indefinite detention when trying to return home from vacation."

The TSA denied the existence of such a list until November 2002, according to an

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THE MILITANT

Oppose bipartisan expansion of police powers

Under the pretext of "fighting terrorism," Democrats are leading the U.S. rulers' drive to expand the powers of the political police. The 'Militant' explains how this offensive targets the labor movement, Black rights organizations, and others who resist the offensive by the bosses and their government. Don't miss a single issue!

Customs agent fingerprints and photographs visitor under Homeland Security program.

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Editor: ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
Business Manager: MICHAEL ITALIE
Washington Bureau Chief: SAM MANUEL
Editorial Staff: Róger Calero, Michael Italie, Martín Koppel, Sam Manuel, Doug Nelson, and Paul Pederson.

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Abortion rights march

Continued from front page

Liz Ridge, also 20, at a send-off rally of 2,000 at the Boston Common on Saturday night, April 24. "Most people don't even know it's going on. We need to be visible." Forrester said 100 students from her school were marching.

Many similar send-off rallies took place around the country.

Cha Yeon, 24, from Gaithersburg, Maryland, who joined the National Organization for Women (NOW) two years ago, came with several friends. "Step by step they are chipping away at our rights," she said. "They may seem like little steps, like the UBVA, but really it is backlashing against women's rights. We say we believe it's your choice, go to church, don't believe in abortion or believe in abortion, it's your right. But in return respect our rights, our right to our choices as guaranteed under the Bill of Rights."

Yeon was referring to the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, a bill recently approved by Congress, which U.S. president George Bush signed into law April 1. The law grants legal status to a fetus, defining an "unborn child" as "a member of the species *Homo Sapiens*, at any stage of development, who is carried in the womb." The law also makes it a federal crime to harm or kill a fetus during the commission of another federal crime.

As thousands of demonstrators streamed in toward the mall from nearby subway stations, they faced a few hundred opponents of abortion rights who held placards with pictures of fetuses and slogans such as "Abortion kills children." Most contingents, especially of college students, confronted these bystanders—who were in their majority older men, including a small group of priests—with loud chants of "Choice! Choice!" and "Right to Life, your name's a lie! You don't care if women die!"

Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Demonstrator modifies her sign to counter handful of rightists standing on sidelines while hundreds of thousands march by to back women's right to choose abortion.

Pre-printed signs by sponsoring groups circulated in the thousands. But the number of hand-made signs and placards was striking. "My body is not public property," read a number. "Anti hanger, Pro Choice," said another sign, referring to the practice of using coat hangers to perform abortions when the procedure was illegal, which led to injuries and deaths of thousands of women. Many identified where they came from, like "Texas Grandmothers for Choice."

Quite a number of contingents were led off with the drumbeats of impromptu bands, dancing their way to the mall.

Among those leading off the march were representatives of the principal sponsoring groups, including Black Women's Health Imperative, National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, NOW, and Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Actors Whoopi Goldberg, Susan Sarandon, and Camryn Manheim were among the speakers. A host of Democratic Party politicians such as Senator Barbara Boxer and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright also joined, with several speaking at the rally.

Speakers aim fire at Bush, back Kerry

Speakers at the rally aimed their fire entirely at the Bush administration. Most called on demonstrators to work hard to elect Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry in November, as the way to defend women's rights.

"We are determined to stop the war on women," said Eleanor Smeal of the Feminist Majority Foundation, citing recent actions of the Bush administration as the main threat. "We must overturn the gag rule," she stated, referring to an executive order Bush restored when he took office in January 2001. The order bars U.S. aid to overseas clinics or international groups that use their own money to support abortion counseling or access. "We must turn out the vote," Smeal said in ending her remarks.

"Tell Ashcroft to take his long rightwing arms off our privacy," said Gloria Feldt of Planned Parenthood, referring to attempts by Attorney General John Ashcroft to force clinics that have performed abortions to hand over records to the Justice Department. The government says it needs the records to enforce a new law that bans an abortion procedure known as intact dilation and extraction. The bill was demagogically named "Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act."

In a victory in the fight to defend abortion rights, a federal appeals court in Chicago rejected on March 26 the Justice Department demand for abortion records from Northwestern Memorial Hospital. The court ruled that turning over these records would violate the privacy of the women who had had abortions at the hospital. Legal challenges initiated by the National Abortion Federation, Planned Parenthood, and others to this anti-abortion measure began March 29 in three separate cases—in New York, San Francisco, and Lincoln, Nebraska.

"No CARB diet," was a popular slogan, with the initials referring to U.S. vice president Richard Cheney, Ashcroft, U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and Bush.

Senator Hilary Clinton was one of many Democratic Party politicians who spoke. "The last march helped elect a pro-choice president," she said. "If all we do is march today that will not change the direction this country is headed under this administration…. We have to vote."

"We didn't have to march for 12 long years because we had a government that respected the rights of women," Hillary Clinton said, boasting about her husband's presidency. "The only way we're going to be able to avoid having to march again and again and again is to elect John Kerry." The *New York Times* and other liberal dailies highlighted this remark.

The last major mobilization for abortion rights took place in April 1992, seven months before the election of William Clinton. No such national march was called during the Clinton presidency.

The claims by Democratic politicians notwithstanding, attacks on women's right to choose abortion—especially restricting access for working-class and farm women—have been pushed through by both Democratic and Republican administrations (see article on page 10).

While organizers pushed hard for mobilizing to elect Kerry, there was no enthusiasm among a sizeable number of demonstrators, especially youth, for the Democratic presidential candidate. "Kerry sucks less," was a typical comment, comparing Kerry to Bush, and expressing an attitude widespread among thousands.

Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Contingent marching behind banner, "Women of Color for Reproductive Rights."

There was no perspective offered by the organizers on what to do next to fight for women's rights, other than registering to vote and "pushing Bush out" in November. But the size and spirit of the demonstration showed the massive character of the support for a woman's right to choose abortion, indicating the immense difficulty all those trying to make abortion a crime once again will have to reach that goal.

In her remarks at the rally, Charlene Barrientos Ortiz cited the case of Rosie Jimenez, "The first victim of the Hyde Amendment," which was passed by Congress in 1976, she said, "that restricts Medicaid funds for abortions but will pay for sterilizations, imagine that." Today only 21 states provide funding for abortions, and some two-thirds of women annually pay for the procedure themselves.

The father and brother of Becky Bell also appeared briefly, encouraging the crowd to "Keep it up. No More Becky Bells!" Bell died in September 1988 in Indiana after seeking an illegal abortion to avoid having to comply with parental consent laws. These laws, which require young women to get permission from their parents to obtain an abortion, are now in effect in more than half the states. In addition, mandatory waiting periods in some states require women to wait up to 24 hours between "counseling" and an operation, which often means substantially higher costs for obtaining an abortion.

Larger participation by Blacks

A higher proportion of Blacks, especially young women, took part in the action than other previous marches for abortion rights. This was also reflected among the endorsers and the speakers at the rally.

Julian Bond spoke, for example, representing the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), one of the 1,400 endorsing organizations. It was the first abortion rights action the NAACP has officially backed.

Lisa Gay Hamilton, an actress who is Black and who helped emcee the morning rally, also spoke about the impact on Black women of restricting access to abortion.

The lack of access to abortion comes down the hardest on working-class women, and even more so on farm women. Only 13 percent of counties in the United States have an abortion provider today. In rural areas the figure is a bare 3 percent.

There was no major participation by unions at the march. Some national trade unions, such as the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) did endorse the action. UFCW and AFSCME individual union members from several states were seen here and there carrying signs identifying their union locals.

The march capped off a weekend of dozens of pro-choice activities in the city. Hundreds of young people, for example, took part in a Choice USA youth conference on Saturday, April 24, which was organized by social democratic forces around Gloria Steinem, a founder of *Ms.* magazine. A Latina Summit on Women's Health took place at the same time, featuring Latino politicians, mostly Democrats. During the plenary of that meeting, Alyson Kennedy, a coal miner from Utah, spoke about the strike of UMWA-organized miners in Huntington, Utah, that has lasted for seven months (see article on page 4). That evening thousands packed the D.C. National Guard Armory for the official march kick-off.

The largest contingents at the demonstration next day, mostly of young women, came from college campuses across the country.

Sara Rizak-Baer, an 18-year-old freshman, was among three busloads of students who came from Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio. The buses from that campus were organized by Students United for Reproductive Freedom and the ACLU.

"We signed people up through e-mail and on tables and by word of mouth," she said. "I am very pro-choice, and I fear it is becoming illegal. It is scary to think that [Supreme Court] justices can just overturn it. It makes me really question the checks and balances."

Support for the action extended across generations. Hanna Brathman of Chicago, 87, attended the rally along with her daughter and two granddaughters. Brathman, a longtime member of Planned Parenthood, said she didn't feel she could march but insisted on coming because "Bush is attempting to return women to the days of desperation." She recounted how the death of a childhood friend from an illegal abortion got her involved. "In the 1950s no hospital in Chicago would perform the abortion," Brathman said. "If abortion had been legal I am sure my friend would be here also."

Many spoke about the importance of fighting to reverse restrictions on abortion rights and extend access.

"It was awesome to be on the plane with so many people coming here," said Karen, Hana Brathman's granddaughter. It was the first march for her and her sister Lisa. "I'm really learning a lot," Karen said. "It's not just about the abortion itself. There are so many other related issues—cost of abortion, access. We have this right but it doesn't mean much if you can't afford it or you must travel hundreds of miles to get it."

Like most of those attending the demonstration Hanna, Lisa, and Karen thought that a woman's right to choose had been put in peril by the Bush administration. Some explained, however, that the most important thing is the struggle to defend women's rights, no matter who is in the White House. "Bush has to go," Hanna said, "but I have been around this issue a long time and it's not going to go away soon no matter who is elected."

Romina Green from Cleveland and Maggie Trowe from Boston contributed to this article.

Militant/Hilda Cuzco

A popular sign at April 25 march, rally.

Florida workers at Point Blank win contract

Continued from front page

contract with the union. Workers ratified the agreement April 19.

Management had earlier threatened workers it would rather close shop than recognize the union.

"The company has recognized the union based on a showing of union authorization cards, confirmed by a neutral third party," a press release issued by DHB, Point Blank's parent company, conceded. "[A] majority of employees at the Oakland Park facility have indicated their desire for union representation."

DHB Industries specializes in producing protective body armor for the armed forces and various police agencies. DHB Sports Group produces and markets a line of athletic supports and braces.

According to the company's press release, DHB maintains facilities in Westbury, New York; Jacksboro, Tennessee; and Arlington, Virginia, in addition to the three south Florida plants.

The company had fiercely resisted the union-organizing campaign, after a large majority had signed union authorization cards. When a delegation of workers went to the bosses in July 2002 demanding management recognize UNITE, the company responded by ordering a police-enforced one-day lockout and by firing two union militants.

Workers walked out in August 2002 to protest the firing of a third union supporter, beginning what turned into a six-month strike. One hundred seventy-five workers kept the picket line outside the plant strong, while the company continued production with workers who crossed the picket line and replacements recruited during the strike.

Company said it would 'crush strike'

One worker, who started the job during the strike but later became a union supporter, recalled how during the walkout the company president once got up on a table inside the plant and told workers, "I am going to crush those snakes."

"He started stamping his feet like he was killing snakes," the worker said. "He nearly fell off the table!"

Among the former strikers are workers born in countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean: Chile, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru. A large number are from Haiti. On the picket lines, Haitian workers learned to chant union slogans in Spanish. Latino workers in turn learned more than one song in Creole.

Because of the strength of the unionists on the line, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled that Point Blank had trampled on workers' rights. In February 2003, the NLRB imposed an injunction—often referred to as a 10(j)—ordering the company to take back all the strikers and reinstate the three fired unionists, and to refrain from threatening to close the plant or cut hours in response to the union drive.

After six months on strike, the union militants returned to work with a victory under their belts.

The company opened a second factory in nearby Deerfield Beach in response, transferring 100 strikebreakers there. The new plant was used to expand production of the Interceptor vest—in short supply and standard-issue for the U.S. occupying armies in Iraq and Afghanistan. Point Blank is the major supplier of these vests, which sell for $1,500 each. The company intended to keep the new facility union-free.

Gains from the strike, even before union recognition, were readily apparent at Oakland Park. Before the walkout, many workers say, bathrooms frequently were without soap, paper towels, or toilet paper. After the strike the bathrooms stayed supplied.

Many workers describe how the company repeatedly stepped on their dignity before the strike. "One of the supervisors walked through the plant one day with a bottle of water and told workers, 'that's all you need for one day,'" one worker said. "They said we were taking too much time getting up for water and going to the bathroom."

Now there are several water coolers around the plant and workers get up and get water whenever they need it.

The company suffered a further blow when the NLRB ruled in October 2003 that for the purposes of union representation, the two factories were one bargaining unit.

The NLRB ordered a representation election covering both plants, and extended the 10(j) protection to workers at the Deerfield Beach factory.

Despite its hypocritical claim to favor union elections, the company appealed that decision and elections were not held. UNITE organizers said that a fair election was impossible, given Point Blank's consistent violation of worker's rights. Instead, union organizers pushed for winning union recognition through a "card count."

Workers refused to give up

In the face of hostility and legal maneuvering by management, workers did not let go. Unionists rallied to celebrate one-year anniversaries of key dates in their struggle such as the lock-out and the start of the strike. Most recently they rallied on "Broom Day"—the day they got back on the job in February 2003, when they were all given brooms and told to clean the factory.

New workers at both plants continued to sign up for the union. Red UNITE T-shirts never went out of fashion at the Oakland Park facility. More than once unionists in the plant organized delegations of workers to go into the company offices to get an answer to problems on the shop floor. Visible gatherings of union supporters took place almost daily outside the plant.

Company spokespeople tried to put a good spin on the agreement. "We just did what's in the best interests of the company," David Brooks, chairman and chief executive of DHB Industries, told the *Miami Herald*. "We want to get on with our business, rather than wasting time." DHB put $2.7 million of its profits into bonuses for "key employees and executives" last year, and claimed an additional $63.3 million in "gross profit."

The company agreed to union recognition for UNITE during a major expansion and reorganization. In April they opened a third facility—their largest, with 104,000 square feet, in nearby Pompano Beach.

Union members see it differently

"He did not give in because he wanted to," said Elizabeth Pastor, a UNITE member who took part in the strike, after the contract was signed. "It was because we never let up the pressure. We won a contract that he said he would never accept."

The agreement was reached after about two months of talks "off-the-record," UNITE spokesperson Luke Brindle told the *South Florida Sun Sentinel*. Under the terms of the agreement, all litigation between the company and the union has been dropped, including contested NLRB proceedings and the 10(j) injunction. The company is also dropping a lawsuit accusing UNITE of defamation for charging that the company had been manufacturing defective bulletproof vests.

In the two weeks before the contract vote, 100 workers from Oakland Park who had not joined UNITE were transferred to the Pompano facility, along with much of the factory's equipment, fabric, and supplies.

Union members stayed at Oakland Park and were joined by about 30 workers from the Deerfield facility—12 miles away—who had signed union cards in the last two years.

The company had claimed for a year that Deerfield was a separate company as a ploy in its attempt to keep the union out.

Management organized the moves in a way designed to maximize insecurity among both union members and workers who have not joined the union.

One afternoon, about 15 workers at Deerfield Beach were told to attend a meeting at Oakland Park at 8:00 a.m. the next day. When asked if this meant they would now be assigned to work there, the company spokespeople claimed they didn't know.

When the workers showed up at the meeting, they were immediately put to work at Oakland Park. A former Deerfield sewer who was transferred to Oakland Park, commented, "I'm for the union, but I want to work at the Deerfield plant and have a union there."

The company treated nonunion workers like machines, too. Many were given five minutes to pack their things and head over to the new Pompano Beach location.

The new contract goes into effect April 26. It allows union representatives access to the plant, and provides a union bulletin board, a grievance procedure, and shop-steward representation. The contract also includes a provision for an increase in paid sick and personal leave days, a company-funded 401(K) retirement plan to be administered by UNITE, a $270 signing bonus, and wage increases of 25 cents an

Continued on Page 5

Co-Op miners salute victory at Point Blank

BY GUILLERMO ESQUIVEL

HUNTINGTON, Utah—"When the bosses drive by we yell: We're still here!" said Gonzalo Salazar, one of the strikers at the Co-Op mine here. "They used to wave good-bye at us, but not anymore."

Salazar was referring to the victory of the strikers in defeating a ban on their picket trailer that the company had instigated.

As they celebrated their victory, the Co-Op miners sent a message of congratulations to garment workers at Point Blank in Florida for their union victory (see article above), and a thanks for their solidarity to the National Union of Miners in the UK.

On April 22, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Utah mailed a letter to the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) that officially allows the Co-Op strikers to picket at the mine's entrance with a picket shack, a toilet facility, strike signs, and a camper trailer. "A permit from BLM will not be necessary in this case since your proposed use of public lands falls under the definition of 'casual use,'" says the letter from BLM's field manager. "There is no time limit involved in casual use; however, we would appreciate being updated periodically on the progress of the strike situation."

The letter was issued to the striking miners after they and several UMWA retirees met with the Utah Department of Transportation and the BLM April 13. Both state agencies had ordered the miners to remove everything from the picket site, claiming the picket trailer and shack obstructed the view of passing motorists and that any use of that land is only for purposes of maintenance and operations of state Route 31. But after many phone calls to the Department of Transportation from supporters of the strike, several articles in local newspapers highlighting the issues in the struggle, and the determination of the UMWA-organized workers and union retirees to refuse to accept the trailer ban, both agencies backed down. The strikers agreed as part of the final agreement to replace the bigger picket trailer for a smaller camper.

The 75 miners are on their seventh month on strike against CW Mining, also known as the Co-Op mine, seeking to obtain safer working conditions, respect and dignity on the job, and be represented by the UMWA.

On April 17 the miners drove a 1975 camper trailer to the picket site, to replace the bigger mobile home that they had used as shelter during the winter months. A resident of Price, Carbon County, sold it to the miners for half the price after a UMWA representative informed him it was for the strike.

The day after they set up this new trailer, the strikers held a BBQ celebration with supporters at the picket line. Despite some rain, several miners who have worked at Co-Op and others from the community came by to eat burgers, hot dogs, and roasted chicken. A striker's wife baked a big Mexican cake, called *tres leches*, and with berries on top that read: "UMWA, GO!"

Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

Co-Op strikers were joined by their families and supporters at an April 18 BBQ at the picket line after defeating a company attempt to shut down their picket trailer.

The following day about a dozen miners offloaded a truck full of food from the Utah Food Bank in Salt Lake City at their food storage in Huntington.

"We received 10 pallets of a lot of fresh food like vegetables and fruits, detergent, paper towels, cookies, refreshments, and a lot more," said Gonzalo Salazar. "This was the second shipment from the food bank in the last two months." Salazar said the food bank will continue making monthly donations as long as the strike lasts.

Between April 20 and April 23, miners said that the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) provided a four-day 32-hour mining course to the strikers in Spanish, free of charge. UMWA local representatives requested MSHA to provide these classes to assure proper training to those miners who had not had the necessary classes while working at the Co-Op mine. Because of this lack of proper training, MSHA is carrying out an investigation on charges of violations of Part 48 of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act against the Co-Op owners, the Kingstons. Many miners report that they were never trained at Co-Op on basic safety conditions underground such as mine escape ways, emergency evacuations, roof and ground controls and ventilation plans, hazard recognition, and mine gases. Instead of the 32 hours of classroom instruction as required by federal law, the trainer at Co-Op only gave four to six hours of classes at his house and charged as much as $300 in cash only, according to the miners. In the state of Utah, new miner training costs $120.

While the strikers were in the MSHA-organized classes a couple of retired UMWA miners helped staff the picket line.

On April 19, the Co-Op strikers also faxed a letter to the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in Great Britain. The NUM has extended its solidarity with the strike through letters of support and financial donations. "It is only with the solidarity like yours that we have been able to maintain the strength to continue this battle for human dignity and justice," reads the letter to the NUM. "We also understand you are holding celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the 1984–85 National Union of Mineworkers strike. Please let every NUM member know that we are with you during these events."

In their letter, in English and Spanish, to the workers at Point Blank Body Armor they said, "We salute you! Your victory is an example for us. Our struggle, like yours, has been long. But like you, we are determined to go forward until we win a real union and be represented by the United Mine Workers of America." Contribution to the striking miners can be sent to: UMWA District 22, 525 East 100 South, Price, Utah 84501. Checks should be earmarked "Co-Op Miners Fund."

Women's rights marchers buy 250 'Militant' subs

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Holding a sign reading "Keep Your Laws Off My Body" in one hand and wearing a T-shirt with a red-white-and-blue "John Kerry for President" sticker on it, a young woman from Connecticut stopped to talk to this reporter at the April 25 abortion rights march in Washington D.C.

"You guys sure are militant about selling the *Militant*," she said, as she scanned the front page of the paper. "I've seen your tables and people selling this paper everywhere I go today. I'll pick up a copy."

Dotting the mall between the Capitol and the Washington Monument—in the midst of a sea of signs, balloons, banners, and thousands of youthful contingents—over 100 socialist campaigners joined the march and set up literature tables offering a working-class revolutionary perspective to those who mobilized to defend women's rights.

More than 80 *Militant* subscriptions were sold at various kick-off activities the day before the abortion rights march. Fifteen people snapped up subscriptions to the *Militant* at a festival in Dupont Circle Park in support of a woman's right to choose sponsored by Planned Parenthood.

The all-out effort by socialists to build and participate in the April 25 march has fired the momentum of the international *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* subscription drive. At least 250 subscriptions to the *Militant* and nearly 500 Pathfinder books and pamphlets were sold at the weekend's events alone. The total for the fifth week of the drive was a whopping 443 *Militant* subs. As we go to press, 1,432 *Militant* subscriptions have been sold—putting the campaign ahead of schedule and in a strong position to surpass the 2,000 goal.

The contradiction between the size of the local goals and the performance so far has become increasingly glaring—the total of the local targets adopted still falls 52 below the international goal. With supporters in half a dozen cities nearly at or over 90 percent of their quotas, and in two cases having surpassed the target three weeks ahead of schedule, the time is over-ripe for a number of increases in local goals.

A quick look at the "In the Unions" section of the chart shows that a challenge lies ahead in the remaining three weeks for socialist workers in garment factories, textile mills, meatpacking plants, coal mines, and elsewhere to bring the drive home in those industrial unions in full and on time.

A concerted effort is also needed to close the gap on the goal for *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions—nearly 100 short of the mark.

In addition to the excellent results during the march on Washington, many new readers were won elsewhere last week.

Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists members got quite a response from a display they set up in Los Angeles at the April 24-25 *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books. They sold 40 *Militant* subscriptions there, and another six at a nearby women's rights action in the city on April 25.

"Many were interested in the paper's coverage of the Co-Op strike and the articles on Venezuela," wrote Frank Forrestal from Los Angeles. "Most subs were sold with a few books or pamphlets."

Militant/Carlos Sanchez

***Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martín Koppel (left) sells *Militant* on Mall in Washington, D.C, during April 25 pro-choice rally. Protesters purchased 250 *Militant* subscriptions and 500 Pathfinder books and pamphlets that weekend.**

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Spring Subscription Drive March 20–May 17: Week 5 of 8

	Militant			PM	
Country	**Goal**	**Sold**	**%**	**Goal**	**Sold**
UNITED STATES					
Washington	**65**	**71**	**109%**	**20**	**8**
Houston	**55**	**57**	**104%**	**15**	**8**
Miami	**70**	**68**	**97%**	**18**	**10**
Omaha	**50**	**48**	**96%**	**40**	**32**
Philadelphia	**60**	**51**	**85%**	**10**	**3**
Newark*	**125**	**106**	**85%**	**35**	**16**
Atlanta	**55**	**45**	**82%**	**20**	**4**
Twin Cities	**75**	**61**	**81%**	**35**	**16**
Boston	**85**	**69**	**81%**	**50**	**20**
Los Angeles	**135**	**109**	**81%**	**50**	**18**
Birmingham	**30**	**24**	**80%**	**8**	**2**
New York	**200**	**160**	**80%**	**60**	**32**
Des Moines	**50**	**39**	**78%**	**25**	**15**
Cleveland	**30**	**21**	**70%**	**8**	**4**
Detroit	**50**	**35**	**70%**	**8**	**2**
NE Pennsylvania	**45**	**31**	**69%**	**10**	**4**
Utah*	**40**	**27**	**68%**	**15**	**12**
San Francisco	**120**	**81**	**68%**	**40**	**11**
Tampa	**30**	**19**	**63%**	**10**	**4**
Chicago	**100**	**63**	**63%**	**35**	**24**
Pittsburgh	50	30	60%	3	1
Seattle	60	19	32%	10	2
Western Col.	30	9	30%	15	3
U.S. total	**1610**	**1243**	**77%**	**540**	**251**
UNITED KINGDOM					
Edinburgh	**20**	**14**	**70%**		
London	**50**	**36**	**72%**	**10**	**3**
UK total	**70**	**50**	**71%**	**10**	**3**
NEW ZEALAND					
Christchurch	**26**	**20**	**77%**	**1**	**0**
Auckland	25	13	52%	1	0
N.Z. total	**51**	**33**	**65%**	**2**	**0**
AUSTRALIA	**45**	**29**	**64%**	**7**	**4**
ICELAND	18	11	61%	1	0
SWEDEN					
Gothenburg	**14**	**10**	**71%**	**4**	**2**
Stockholm	15	5	33%	8	1
SWEDEN Total	29	15	52%	12	2
CANADA					
Montreal	25	11	44%	10	4
Vancouver	60	26	43%	9	5
Toronto	50	14	28%	7	10
CANADA total	135	51	38%	26	19
Int'l totals	**1958**	**1432**	**72%**	**598**	**279**
Goal/Should be	**2000**	**1250**	**63%**	**600**	**375**

IN THE UNIONS

	Militant			PM	
Country	**Goal**	**Sold**	**%**	**Goal**	**Sold**
AUSTRALIA					
AMIEU	10	6	60%		
UNITED STATES					
UFCW	110	59	54%	123	81
UMWA	50	25	50%	12	7
UNITE	50	16	32%	40	19
Total	210	100	48%	175	107
CANADA					
UFCW	13	5	38%	5	2
UNITE	9	0	0%	5	1
Total	22	5	23%	10	3
NEW ZEALAND					
NDU	2	0	0%	1	0
MWU	2	0	0%		
Total	4	0	0%	1	0
SWEDEN					
LIVS	4	0	0%	1	0
***raised goal**					

AMIEU—Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union; LIVS—Food Workers Union; MWU—Meat Workers Union; NDU—National Distribution Union; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA—United Mine Workers of America.

$20,000 a week needed for 'Militant' fund

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

NEWARK, New Jersey—"If we carry the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* fund to victory, we'll be in a good position to organize more reporting teams and expand further the paper's distribution," said Argiris Malapanis at a Militant Labor Forum here on April 23. "This year's fund," he said, "will help send reporters to Venezuela to cover the Caracas book fair, one of Latin America's largest, which for the first time will include a booth of Pathfinder titles, staffed by an international crew of volunteers."

The 21 participants in the meeting contributed more than $1,000 after hearing how the fund is needed to cover daily costs of the two publications—including paying for rent and electricity, maintenance and upgrades for computer and other equipment, and printer and shipping bills, along with reporting trips and the costs to subsidize the *Militant's* rapidly expanding subscribers' base. Mike Taber, a local fund organizer, said that after the successful meeting, total pledges now exceed the local goal.

The March 20–May 17 $85,000 international fund runs in step with the international sales drive aimed at doubling new readers for the *Militant* compared to last year.

The audience paid close attention as Malapanis, the *Militant's* editor, presented a slide show based on a recent reporting trip to Venezuela. Afterward, a number asked questions as they grappled with the class contradictions there and the determination by millions of working people to prevent capitalists and their backers in Washington from turning back the clock by toppling the elected government headed by President Hugo Chávez.

Such fundraising meetings are scheduled in about 10 cities over the April 30–May 2 weekend. They will give a needed boost to the fund, which slipped a little further behind last week.

With three weeks left, 39 percent of the goal has been collected—some 24 percent and $20,000 behind the mark. Supporters need to send in contributions totaling an average of $20,000 per week to bring in all the pledges.

To make a contribution, send a check or money order payable to "The Militant," and mail it to 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Point Blank victory

Continued from page 4

hour each year for five years.

"I am very happy," sewing machine operator Virginia Salazar told the *Militant*. She was a leading unionists during the strike. "It is what we were hoping for. The union is what guarantees respect on the job. The gains are more job security and that they respect workers' rights. It wasn't just for money that we did what we did, but for dignity."

Many manufacturing workers are paid around the minimum wage in South Florida and most plants are nonunion. The Point Blank fight has been watched closely by the business press and by workers in the area. Miami is a center for clothing manufacture, which in recent years has been run almost completely nonunion.

Point Blank has a history of denying overtime and scheduling layoffs as a tool for punishing workers who stand up to the company. For two weeks, as the company transferred workers between Oakland Park and Pompano, it eliminated overtime at the Oakland Park plant.

At the end of the first day of the new contract, the company announced more stringent work rules including making workers stay at their machines until break bells ring, prohibiting workers from eating in their work areas even though lunch room facilities are grossly inadequate, and instructing workers to take home microwaves used for heating their meals, even though the company has no plans to replace those with new microwaves.

Workers greeted the new rules with a tremendous outcry: booing, hissing, and interrupting the managers. Many workers, disgusted with the company plan, punched out and went home while the managers were still talking.

"During the strike, the owner, David Brooks, said that we were snakes," said Beatriz Pereira, a sewer. "He spit at us, he gave us the finger. Well, now the snakes are inside. For that I am happy. The raise is small, but I think that in the circumstances it's the best we can get. The most important thing is now we have the union."

Eric Simpson and Seth Galinsky are members of UNITE at Point Blank Body Armor.

$85,000 Militant/PM Fund March 20—May 17: Week 5 of 8

	Goal	Paid	%
New Zealand	1,600	662	41%
United States			
Miami	**1,700**	**1,294**	**76%**
Tampa	**1,300**	**980**	**75%**
New York	**11,000**	**6,925**	**63%**
Newark	3,500	1,965	56%
Los Angeles	8,000	4,436	55%
Detroit	3,000	1,495	50%
Pittsburgh	3,800	1,700	45%
Houston	3,500	1,500	43%
Washington DC	2,800	1,035	37%
Omaha	440	155	35%
Boston	3,000	1,030	34%
Philadelphia	3,300	1,114	34%
Atlanta	5,000	1,475	30%
Twin Cities	4,000	1,180	30%
Birmingham	2,000	575	29%
Northeast PA	1,600	450	28%
Utah	1,500	400	27%
San Francisco	8,500	1,945	23%
Chicago	5,000	815	16%
Seattle	6,000	965	16%
Cleveland	1,200	190	16%
Western Col.	2,000	300	15%
Des Moines	1,100	150	14%
U.S. Total	83,240	32,074	39%
Iceland	200	50	25%
Sweden	500	100	20%
United Kingdom	1,000	20	2%
Canada	5,000	10	0%
Australia	1,500	0	0%
France	300	0	0%
Other		410	
Int'l Total	**93,340**	**33,326**	**39%**
Goal/Should be	**85,000**	**53,125**	**63%**

U.S. forces maintain siege of Iraqi cities

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

In renewed assaults on Iraqi cities April 26–27, U.S. occupying forces killed 64 Iraqis in a gun battle outside Najaf and launched air and ground attacks on a working-class district in Fallujah.

The continuing U.S. offensive against the two cities accompanied recent statements by U.S. officials that military decisions will remain permanently in their hands, even as they put together an interim Iraqi government to a blueprint endorsed by top United Nations officials. All the same, U.S. officials continue to describe the administration to be imposed by June 30 as a "transfer of sovereignty" from foreign occupation authorities to Iraqi officials.

The Fallujah fighting began after U.S. commanders declared an end to a so-called ceasefire imposed two weeks earlier, after a U.S. assault—prepared by a propaganda offensive whipping up outrage over the deaths of four mercenaries—in which hundreds of Iraqis were killed. The "ceasefire" has been marked by aggressive air and ground patrols, several bloody clashes, and constant activity by Marine snipers.

The April 27 attack involved Marines on the ground and at least one AC-130 gunship. The Associated Press reported that "blasts and gunfire went on steadily for more than half an hour in sustained fighting, apparently in the northern Jolan district, a poor neighborhood where Sunni insurgents are concentrated."

Fallujah, a center of the Sunni Muslim population, was a base of the Baath Party under the Saddam Hussein regime. Since the U.S. and British governments launched their invasion last year, it has been a center of armed resistance to the invading and occupying forces.

U.S. aircraft built up to the attacks with a leaflet drop on the city of 200,000 people. The leaflets instructed fighters to "surrender, you are surrounded. If you are a terrorist, beware, because your last day was yesterday. In order to spare your life end your actions and surrender to coalition forces now."

U.S. officials said that the April 26 Najaf attack had targeted an antiaircraft gun nest. There were no reports of U.S. deaths in the slaughter, which involved helicopter gunships as well as ground forces.

April 23 rally in Najaf, a city in south-central Iraq that is surrounded by 2,500 U.S. troops, in defense of Muqtada al-Sadr, the Shiite cleric who has spoken out against the U.S.-led occupation.

Over the past couple of weeks, U.S. troops have maintained a standoff in Najaf with supporters of Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr, whose militia, known as the Mahdi Army, recently carried out attacks on U.S.-led forces. Working through Iraqi Governing Council and Shiite intermediaries, U.S. officers are demanding al-Sadr's surrender and the breakup of his militia.

In other parts of Iraq such as the town of Balad and the Sadr City district of Baghdad, U.S. forces have been conducting raids against al-Sadr's forces.

The April 26–27 fighting in Najaf occurred as U.S. troops cleared the way to replace the Spanish unit that had held the base in the city.

The government of Spain has announced that it is planning for the withdrawal of its 1,400 troops from the imperialist occupation force. A spokesperson for the recently elected Socialist Party, said Spanish intelligence agents would remain in Iraq at Washington's request. Madrid would "maintain a commitment" there, she said. "It's just a question of deciding where and how."

Making clear his disapproval of the Spanish withdrawal, U.S. president George Bush stressed to prime minister-elect José Luis Zapatero, "the importance of carefully considering future actions to avoid giving false comfort to terrorists or enemies of freedom in Iraq," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said April 19.

Democratic Party presidential candidate John Kerry said, "I had hoped the [Spanish] prime minister would have reconsidered his position." The Honduran and Dominican governments have also announced they will withdraw their troops, totaling 672, from a brigade operating in south-central Iraq under Spanish command.

To give the imperialist occupation a greater façade of legitimacy, Washington has embraced a proposal by a "special envoy" of UN General Secretary Kofi Annan for a slightly modified version of the projected "interim" government. Under this proposal, the occupying authorities will pick a president, prime minister, and a cabinet.

U.S. commanders will "have the right, and the power, and the obligation" to decide on military operations, said Marc Grossman, U.S. undersecretary of state for political affairs. "We would do our very best to consult with that interim government and take their views into account," he said.

'U.S. forces must operate freely'

U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell said April 26, in a calculated understatement, that he hoped Iraqis "will understand that in order for this government to get up and running—to be effective—some of its sovereignty will have to be given back." U.S. forces, he said, "have to be able to operate freely."

The interim body would replace the Iraqi Governing Council, handpicked last year by the U.S. overseer of the occupation, Paul Bremer. The 25-person council includes politicians exiled by the Saddam Hussein regime, pro-occupation leaders of the Kurdish nationality, Sunni and Shiite Muslim figures, and a leader of the Iraqi Communist Party.

In another adjustment to provide a more convincing façade for their occupation and stronger leadership for previously unreliable Iraqi military units, U.S. officials said April 22 that Bremer's office and the Pentagon might reinstate Iraqi administrators and military officers who had been purged for their alleged association with the former ruling Baath Party of Saddam Hussein.

In doing so, they are reining in what Bremer called the "overzealous" approach by Governing Council member Ahmad Chalabi to the U.S.-backed "de-Baathification" campaign. Chalabi, a wealthy businessman who spent decades in exile conspiring against the Hussein regime with U.S. financing, boasted in January that the Council had purged 28,000 former Baathists.

U.S. officials have complained about the performance of the under-equipped Iraqi security forces sent into combat in recent weeks. About 10 percent "actually worked against us," said Gen. Martin Dempsey, commander of the 1st Armored Division," while others refused to risk engagement with the insurgents.

U.S. forces have continued to launch forays in Baghdad, taking some losses as they do so. On April 17, they shut down sections of two major highways running through the city, "after days of roadside bombings and ambushes," the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

Israeli tanks invade Gaza Strip

Continued from front page

cent meeting with U.S. president George Bush in Washington, "I told the president the following: 'In our first meeting about three years ago, I accepted your request not to harm Arafat physically….' I told him I understand the problems surrounding the situation, but I am released from that pledge." U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell claimed that Bush "firmly believes that he has a commitment from Prime Minister Sharon that no such attempt [on Arafat's life] will be made."

Tel Aviv has assassinated more than 150 Palestinian leaders since September 2000. Helicopter gunships murdered Hamas leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin March 22, and Yassin's successor Abdel Aziz Rantisi four weeks later. The Palestine Media Center said that the Beit Lahiya rocket attacks were an act of revenge for Rantisi's killing, which had earlier sparked protests by thousands of Palestinians.

The Israeli offensive against Beit Lahiya, Rafah, Tulkarm, and other Palestinian centers came a week after Bush announced his support for Sharon's so-called disengagement plan, under which Tel Aviv would expand Israel's official borders to include major West Bank settlements. The proposal also includes the withdrawal of 7,500 Israeli settlers from the Gaza Strip, a step that would rid Tel Aviv of a major "security" headache, while leaving it in control of the impoverished area's airports, land borders, and seaport. Sharon has repeatedly stressed Tel Aviv's intention to continue conducting military assaults throughout Palestinian territories to "defend Israel's security."

Seeking to make the most of his political victory, Sharon told the Israeli parliament April 22 that Palestinians view Bush's statement as "the heaviest blow inflicted on them since the War of Independence"—the Zionist name for the 1947-48 assaults that set up the Israeli state. "Since the establishment of the state, we have not received such vast and staunch political support," he crowed.

Sharon made it clear that he intends to drive the plan through with or without majority support in the right-wing Likud Party that he leads. A poll published April 22 indicated that 44 percent of party members would vote for the plan right now, and 40 percent would vote against. Former prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu is one of the key Likud figures to back Sharon, citing Washington's support as the decisive factor. "Whoever wishes to prevent the flooding of Israel with refugees, whoever wishes to keep the large Israeli settlement blocs under our control forever...must support the Disengagement Plan," Sharon said.

The previous day, Bush stated that "Sharon came to America and he stood up with me and he said, 'We are pulling out of Gaza and parts of the West Bank.' In my judgment, the whole world should have said, 'Thank you, Ariel. Now we have a chance to begin the construction of a peaceful Palestinian state.'"

Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry also endorsed the plan, and has sought to outdo his Republican rival in presenting himself as an unswerving ally of Tel Aviv against the Palestinians. "I support the building of the security fence" he said April 23, referring to the 400-mile wall being constructed around and into the West Bank that will shut the majority of the Palestinian population off from 58 percent of the territory.

Mahmud Hams/AFP/Getty Images

Palestinians fight back with stones against Israeli tank during April 20 invasion of Beit Lahiya in Gaza. Israeli forces killed three and injured 21 in the several-day assault.

Further reading from Pathfinder

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U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War
by Jack Barnes
Analyzes the propertied rulers' failed expectations coming out of the Cold War and charts a course for revolutionaries in response to the renewed rise of worker and farmer resistance.

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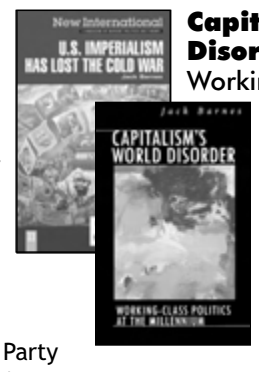

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Competent neighborhood clinics operated by Cuban doctors spread across Venezuela

Nationwide literacy campaigns involve 4 million in adult education classes

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

VALENCIA, Venezuela—"This state and this city, in particular, were a test case for *Barrio Adentro*," said Joel Pantoja, a doctor who graduated last year from the medical school at the University of Carabobo. Pantoja spoke on March 17 to *Militant* reporters in this major industrial center and capital of Carabobo state.

Barrio Adentro, which translates roughly as "Into the heart of the neighborhood," is the name of a government-sponsored program that has brought thousands of volunteer Cuban doctors operating free neighborhood clinics in working-class districts and rural areas across the country where workers and farmers have had little or no access to health care. This is one of the social programs launched last year, along with nationwide literacy campaigns now involving 4 million, that have spread around the country with aid and volunteers from Cuba.

The state government in Carabobo and the Valencia city administration have been in the hands of the pro-imperialist opposition since Hugo Chávez was elected president of Venezuela in 1998. The coalition of opposition forces, Coordinadora Democrática, and the Venezuelan Medical Federation have waged a virulent campaign against Barrio Adentro, charging that Cuban doctors are here as "agents of Fidel Castro" who came not to save lives but "to indoctrinate the poor with communism."

On a previous visit last October, Pantoja and a handful of other Venezuelan doctors told *Militant* reporters they were trying to start Barrio Adentro themselves in Valencia, since it seemed that Cuban doctors would not set foot in Carabobo until the local and state governments changed hands. Until the end of 2003, authorization by local governments was required to bring in Cuban doctors.

Pantoja said there are now 1,200 Cuban doctors in Carabobo, about half of them in Valencia's working-class neighborhoods. A total of 10,000 Cuban doctors are now working in the country. Their numbers have increased five-fold since October, according to figures in the Cuban press and reports by the Libertador municipality of Caracas, where the program was launched.

Hilario Padrino, a traumatologist who serves as the Venezuelan coordinator for Barrio Adentro in Carabobo state, confirmed these figures in a March 17 interview in his Valencia office.

To cut through the obstacles to Barrio Adentro in the eight states where the government is controlled by forces allied with Coordinadora Democrática, the national government declared all neighborhood clinics operated by Cuban doctors to be primary care centers under the jurisdiction of the national Ministry of Health, Pantoja said. As a result, approval by local authorities is no longer needed to bring volunteer doctors from Cuba. So Barrio Adentro has now reached virtually every corner of the country. "The victory in Carabobo was a watershed for the spread of the program," Pantoja said.

How the program spread

About 250 Cuban doctors, nurses, and technicians had served in Venezuela for about five years, arriving soon after Chávez's election. But their presence has increased exponentially since last spring, when the government launched Barrio Adentro in the Libertador municipality of Caracas, whose mayor, Freddy Bernal, is one of the figures in the party led by Chávez, the Fifth Republic Movement. The Ministry of Health first appealed to Venezuelan doctors who were willing to live in the working-class areas and offer their services to residents for free, with a salary of about $600 a month paid by the government. Very few came forward.

Granma/Ricardo López Hevia

Cuban doctor Nilda Collazo treats resident of Duaca municipality on the Corona mountains in state of Lara, northwestern Venezuela, in July 2003. About 10,000 Cuban doctors now volunteer across the country.

Through an agreement with Havana, large numbers of volunteer Cuban doctors, most of whom have carried out internationalist volunteer missions in other countries, began arriving in March 2003. The Cuban doctors receive a stipend of $250 a month to cover living expenses. They live in workers' homes in the areas where they serve, operating clinics out of community centers and other facilities. They provide much of the medicine, which is donated by Cuba, free of charge. After receiving morning patients at the walk-in clinics, in the afternoons they visit residents in the neighborhoods assigned to them and practice preventive medicine. Venezuelans interviewed by the *Militant* were virtually unanimous in saying that the Cuban doctors—unlike many Venezuelan doctors—treat them as human beings, answering their calls after hours, even in the middle of the night. (For more details see "Cuban doctors in Venezuela operate free neighborhood clinics" in Nov. 3, 2003, *Militant*.)

As the program's popularity began to spread last year, Barrio Adentro came under fire by many capitalists and upper-middle-class layers. The Venezuelan Medical Federation spread false rumors accusing Cuban doctors of malpractice, and on June 1 it asked the courts to bar Cuban volunteers from practicing in the country. A lower court ruled in favor of the Medical Federation but the government appealed the decision. While the legal challenge to the program has not yet been completely resolved, the exemplary conduct of the Cuban doctors has begun to defeat the anticommunist propaganda campaign against the program.

At the same time, physical threats against the doctors have mounted and in some cases have been carried out. One Cuban doctor was killed last year in Araguá state, and a Venezuelan assistant to a Cuban doctor was killed in the Petare neighborhood of Caracas, said Ricardo López, a Cuban doctor who works in the January 23 neighborhood of Caracas, in a March 19 interview. A Venezuelan facilitator of literacy classes was also killed in his car in another Caracas neighborhood in late February, workers in the area said.

Many working people said that a slogan promoted by some supporters of Coordinadora Democrática during opposition rallies has been, "Be a patriot, kill a Cuban doctor."

Security for the Cuban doctors has substantially improved since last year, said Luis Casadiego, who coordinates a community center hosting a clinic with Cuban doctors in the Montepiedad section of the January 23 neighborhood. "That's why assassinations have remained few and physical attacks have begun to concentrate more on Venezuelan assistants," he said.

Sharp class divide

Many class contradictions are evident, however, among those backing the Barrio Adentro program.

Joel Pantoja said he and another 10 young doctors he knows in Valencia immediately volunteered to assist the Cuban doctors who began arriving in Valencia in December. "We were flatly turned down by Padrino," Pantoja said, "who claimed we were troublemakers." Pantoja said he and these other young Venezuelan doctors have led many public protests in the city demanding more radical measures against the economic power of the pro-imperialist opposition trying to overthrow the elected government.

The national government launched Barrio Adentro about a year ago, first by calling for Venezuelan doctors to step forward. About 50 volunteered nationwide at that time.

In the March 19 interview, Padrino acknowledged that 65 Venezuelan doctors had come forward in Valencia since December. "But they don't have the kind of training Cuban doctors have," he said, "especially for servicing working-class neighborhoods and living there." A retraining program has been established for these doctors, Padrino added. "They can sign up to finish some additional medical and social relations courses in order to enroll in Barrio Adentro."

Pantoja said that in many areas of the country, Barrio Adentro is in the hands of Venezuelan coordinators like Padrino. He and his group, Pantoja added, have developed working relations with the Cuban doctors anyway, and have helped out in a number of the neighborhood clinics that Cuban doctors operate. "We've also signed up for the retraining course Padrino set up," he said, "in order to eliminate that obstacle too."

When asked if the goal in Venezuela is to emulate the Cuban health-care system, which offers medical care as a universal right that is free of charge, eliminating medical practice as a business, Padrino replied, "Not exactly."

"Our goal is to provide health care to the poor," Padrino said. "But those who have the resources and want to go to a private clinic should still be able to do so."

Padrino himself is the owner of a large private clinic in Valencia.

"This is what I and the other doctors I collaborate with are battling against within the pro-Chávez camp," Pantoja said. El Cimarrón, a political community group Pantoja helps lead, has now reached the conclusion, he said, that what is needed in Venezuela is a health-care system like that in Cuba, "which means a social revolution is needed to bring it into being."

Many of the social programs being carried out in Venezuela today may seem similar on the surface to those in Cuba, Pantoja noted. But they have a different class content and dynamic in a state where the working-class has taken political power than when run by a capitalist government.

Scope of Barrio Adentro expands

Despite these contradictions, Barrio Adentro is now expanding not just in numbers of volunteer doctors and geographic area but in scope. While in the January 23 neighborhood of Caracas, *Militant* reporters visited several of the new "modules" built every several blocks in that district. "Thirty-eight of them are under construction," said Casadiego, in a neighborhood with a population of 1.5 million. "Two were just inaugurated last week."

These are two-story structures. The bottom floor will be the walk-in clinic while the top is a small apartment that can comfortably accommodate two doctors. The modules are being built with government funds and will provide better facilities for the Cuban volunteers. Until now, all Cuban doctors volunteering in these neighborhoods have been living in the homes of people who offered to host them.

Popular clinics, scheduled to be built starting this year, will expand primary care offered through the modules operated by the Cuban doctors, said Casadiego. They will include modern equipment and a larger number of doctors specializing in various medical skills so they can offer minor surgery, dental care, and other such services. "These clinics will replace the state-owned *ambulatorios,*" Casadiego said, referring to walk-in clinics built under previous regimes that have largely stopped functioning in most working-class neighborhoods. "The popular clinics will offer free medical care to all, regardless of income," he said.

These clinics are supposed to be staffed by a combination of Cuban volunteers and Venezuelan doctors, we were told. About 500 Venezuelan youth are now studying in the Latin American School of Medicine in Havana, Casadiego and Pantoja reported. "The first contingent of them to graduate

Continued on Page 11

Militant photos by Argiris Malapanis

Left: Venezuelan doctor Joel Pantoja in Valencia, March 17. "A health-care system like Cuba's is needed in Venezuela," he said, "and a social revolution is necessary to bring it into being." Right: New "module," or walk-in clinic, being completed in January 23 neighborhood of Caracas, where volunteer Cuban doctors will receive patients on bottom floor and use the top floor as an apartment.

Freedom Charter: for a nonracial S. Africa

Below is an excerpt from the Freedom Charter, which appears in full in a Spanish translation in *Habla Nelson Mandela* (Nelson Mandela Speaks), one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for April. Adopted in 1955 by a congress of the major liberation organizations in South Africa, including the African National Congress (ANC), the charter set forth the goals of the national, democratic revolution in South Africa against the apartheid system and its repressive apparatus.

The apartheid system was officially established in the late 1940s as the legal institutionalization of the complete expropriation by the white-minority ruling class and its government of the African people of South Africa, who form the majority of the population. White-minority rule was maintained through a system of state control over every aspect of the labor and life of the Black majority, which includes Africans, Coloureds, and Indians.

Habla Nelson Mandela includes testimony by Mandela, the ANC's central leader, at trials in 1962 and 1964 that ended with his being sentenced to life imprisonment for his leadership of the anti-apartheid struggle. The growing liberation movement forced his release in 1990. Mandela became South Africa's first Black president after the country's first nonracial election in 1994.

Eli Weinberg

Rally called by Congress of the People in Kliptown, near Johannesburg, 1955.

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Preamble

We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

• that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people;

• that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty, and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality;

• that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities;

• that only a democratic state, based on the will of the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of color, race, sex, or belief;

And therefore, we, the people of South Africa, Black and white together—equals, countrymen, and brothers—adopt this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing nothing of our strength and courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

The people shall govern!

Every man and woman shall have the right to vote for and to stand as a candidate for all bodies which make laws.

All people shall be entitled to take part in the administration of the country.

The rights of the people shall be the same, regardless of race, color, or sex.

All bodies of minority rule, advisory boards, councils, and authorities shall be replaced by democratic organs of self-government.

All national groups shall have equal rights!

There shall be equal status in the bodies of state, in the courts, and in the schools for all national groups and races;

All national groups shall be protected by law against insults to their race and national pride;

All people shall have equal rights to use their own language and to develop their own folk culture and customs;

The preaching and practice of national, race, or color discrimination and contempt shall be a punishable crime;

All apartheid laws and practices shall be set aside.

The people shall share in the country's wealth!

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of all South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks, and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

All other industries and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people;

All people shall have equal rights to trade where they choose, to manufacture, and to enter all trades, crafts, and professions.

The land shall be shared among those who work it!

Restrictions of land ownership on a racial basis shall be ended, and all the land redivided amongst those who work it, to banish famine and land hunger;

The state shall help the peasants with implements, seed, tractors, and dams to save the soil and assist the tillers;

Freedom of movement shall be guaranteed to all who work on the land;

All shall have the right to occupy land wherever they choose;

People shall not be robbed of their cattle, and forced labor and farm prisons shall be abolished.

All shall be equal before the law!

No one shall be imprisoned, deported, or restricted without a fair trial;

No one shall be condemned by the order of any government official;

The courts shall be representative of all the people;

Imprisonment shall be only for serious crimes against the people, and shall aim at re-education, not vengeance;

The police force and army shall be open to all on an equal basis and shall be the helpers and protectors of the people;

All laws which discriminate on grounds of race, color, or belief shall be repealed.

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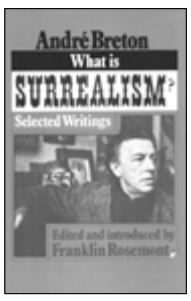
By André Breton



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— GREAT SOCIETY

"Democratic" dungeons—For more than a year and a half scores of Latinos branded as "gang members" were held in solitary con-

Harry Ring

finement in California's gruesome Folsom prison. They were locked up around the clock, denied regular showers, hot meals, exercise, phone calls, and visitors. This criminal treatment is documented in prison records.

Read it, retch, and rebel—The state of Florida is now operating two "faith-based" prisons—one for men, the other for women. A spokesperson for Gov. Jeb Bush says there's no legal problem, the soul-saving is financed by volunteers. Chimed in one of the Bible thumpers: "We need to bring humanity back into these people, to humanize them again. Faith is just one way of doing that."

Meanwhile, let us prey—Russ Stone, a financial planner and promoter of religion in the work place, told the *New York Times* that with the persistent revelations of accounting scandals, his clients are becoming more open to mixing faith and business. Sometimes people will tell him they're having difficulty resolving business decisions. His response: "Why don't we pray on it?"

Astonishing—The *Los Angeles Times* had an interesting account of the annual science fair at the Los Angeles convention center. Participants included prize-winning science students in middle and high schools. At the convention the young researchers discussed scientific issues (ocean pollution, etc.) with professors. A *Times* headline writer seemed astonished. The headline read: "Young minds want to know—Students at annual county science fair tackle grown-up research subjects."

Landlords 101—Students at the University of California, Irvine are resisting administration moves to evict pupils from a campus trailer park. The administration wants it for a parking lot.

Maxed out—"U.S. credit card delinquencies rose to a record in the fourth quarter as the average unemployed worker took almost five months to find a new job, making it difficult for some Americans to keep up with payments, the American Bankers Association said."—News item.

Why waste it on kids—A $1.5 million federal grant was earmarked for the Colorado health department to meet some of the needs of orphans and foster children. Through a "misunderstanding," the fund was used to meet "administrative expenses." The administrators are now scratching their heads about paying it back.

He had a sword cane?—In Denver, 500 cops and kin marched on City Hall and the county building to protest a 10-month suspension of a fellow cop who shot to death a disabled youth allegedly threatening his mother.

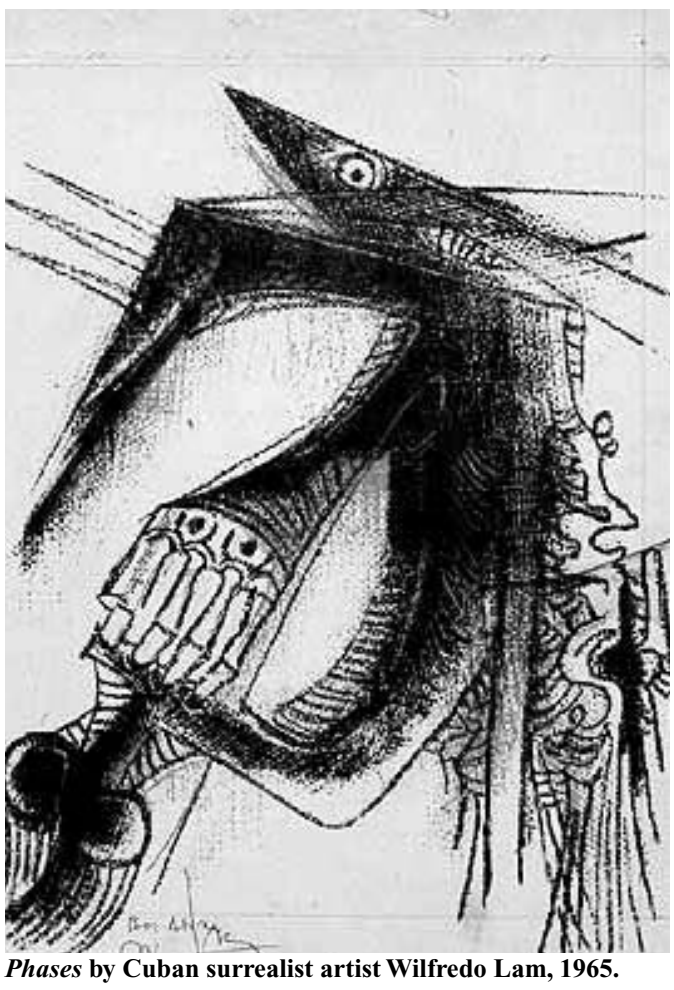
Check it out—We're late in offering readers income tax tips. Like, if you inherited property in 2004, bear in mind that the first $1.5 million of assessed value is tax deductible, not $1 million as it was in earlier harsher years.

An antimony (Big word, eh?)—"Illinois physicians say skyrocketing liability insurance is driving them out of their hometowns and out of the state. Doctors blame lawyers for filing too many malpractice lawsuits, and lawyers blame doctors for making too many mistakes."—News item.

London meeting features 'What Is Surrealism?'

BY CELIA PUGH

LONDON—Fifty people gathered at the Calder Bookshop here on March 11 for a discussion on the surrealist movement and André Breton, one of its leading representatives. Titled, "André Breton and the World of Surrealism," the meeting featured presentations by John Calder, the bookshop's founder, and Jonathan Silberman, from



***Phases* by Cuban surrealist artist Wilfredo Lam, 1965.**

Pathfinder Books in London. The two bookshops are neighbors on a street called The Cut that runs through London's Waterloo district. Pathfinder Press, a New York–based publisher, recently reprinted *What is Surrealism? Selected Writings* by Breton.

Rounding out the program was actor Sean Probert, who read extracts from Breton's writings.

In opening the meeting, Calder remarked, "I hope this will not be the last collaboration between our two bookshops." An A-Z guide to London published in January by *The Times* described Calders Bookshop and Pathfinder as "two of London's most unusual bookshops."

The national daily went on to say that Pathfinder "specializes, in the words of Jonathan Silberman, its representative and leader of the Communist League in the United Kingdom, in 'pulling together the history and lessons learned from the many class-struggle events worldwide.' A few doors along is the bookseller and publisher John Calder, whose early business from 1949 on was primarily in translated classics. The McCarthy era pushed overseas American writers, whom Calder embraced."

Calder's introductory remarks traced the roots of the surrealist movement—one of the most influential currents of art and criticism in the 20th century—to the Dada school, centered in Switzerland during World War I. With the government in Zurich pursuing a policy of official neutrality in the conflict, the country provided a place of temporary exile for revolutionary leaders and nonconformist artists alike.

"The Cabaret Voltaire, a few doors away from where [Russian revolutionary leader V.I.] Lenin lived at the time, became a headquarters for these poets, artists, performers, and writers," said Calder. These artists believed that since "the world was going mad, so art should go mad."

While drawing inspiration from the Dadaist experiments, surrealist leaders like Breton rejected the apolitical stance of these artists, and identified themselves with the revolutionary socialist movement during the deep capitalist crisis of the 1930s.

Breton, said Calder, "believed in the superiority of the imagination and free association over everyday perception and logic and of the poetic over the humdrum. Breton's writings as a whole have had an extremely important influence. Most of these can be found in the book, *What Is Surrealism?*" he said.

Like all cultural movements, said Jonathan Silberman, surrealism was a product of its time. The 1920s and '30s were marked by deepening capitalist crisis and intensifying class struggles, played out in such developments as the victory of fascism in Germany, the financial crisis in Europe and across the globe, the Franco-Spanish war against Morocco, and shifting alliances among the big powers as they prepared for war.

Breton and others were profoundly affected by "the new force which had burst onto the scene" at the beginning of this period, said Silberman—"the October socialist revolution in Russia, which gave hope to the oppressed and downtrodden and gave an impetus to revolutionary struggles in Asia and elsewhere."

The revolution "was a beacon of hope for many artists and intellectuals who sought an alternative to crisis, decadence, and decay," Silberman said.

Drawing on the wealth of material in *What Is Surrealism?* Silberman described how the French-born Breton, deeply influenced by the revolution, fought pressures to adapt to the nationalism of the French capitalist rulers and opposed the war against Morocco. Later in life, following World War II, Breton supported revolutionary struggles in Indochina and Algeria.

Then as now, said Silberman, the imperialist rulers used nationalist poison to draw working people behind their course toward war at home and abroad, "as is happening in Spain in the wake of the Madrid bombing" on March 11.

Defense of artistic freedom

After joining the French Communist Party in 1927, Breton aligned himself with the international left opposition and its leading figure, Leon Trotsky, in resisting the counterrevolutionary policies of the Stalin government in the cultural and political fields. While rejecting Stalinism, Breton did not join the camp of intellectuals and artists who renounced communism and refused to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack.

During Leon Trotsky's exile in Mexico, Breton collaborated closely with the revolutionary leader. Together they championed the stance toward art of the Bolshevik Party of Lenin, who had died in 1924. Rejecting "socialist realism"—the code words for exalting the bureaucratic layer that Stalin represented—they defended the "total independence of the artist" from commercialism, capitalist repression, and bureaucratic control.

One product of this collaboration was the 1938 manifesto, *Towards a Free Revolutionary Art,* signed by Breton and Diego Rivera, the Mexican muralist.

In a 1938 talk by Breton entitled "Visit with Leon Trotsky"—published, along with the manifesto, in *What Is Surreal-*

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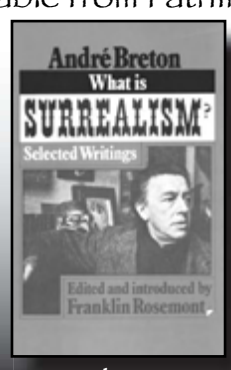

See ad page 8

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO

May 11, 1979

The Blue Diamond Coal company's three-year drive to keep the United Mine Workers out of its Stearns, Kentucky, mine has taken an ominous turn. A new representation election is scheduled for May 3.

The hitch is that the 110 scabs working at the struck mine are eligible to vote, but only sixty of the 122 strikers still on the picket line are on the list of voters.

"And there's going to be a bunch of those sixty challenged," strike leader Darrel Vanover told the *Militant* in a telephone interview. Vanover himself cannot vote. "All they told us is that they 'replaced' us," he says.

The Stearns miners, of course, already voted back in 1976—126 to 57—to be represented by the UMWA. That was three weeks after another nonunion Blue Diamond mine in Scotia, Kentucky, exploded twice, killing twenty-six men.

The Stearns miners didn't want another Scotia. Their battle for the past three years has been first and foremost a fight for safe working conditions.

Blue Diamond's violent resistance has centered around one issue: the UMWA contract provision giving union-elected safety committees the right to shut down unsafe mines.

The union and industry alike have tied the future of UMWA organizing to the fate of the Stearns strike.

"We didn't bring this on ourselves," Vanover says of the bitter three-year fight. "Blue Diamond Coal Company brought all this on. They're the ones who refused to sign the contract here. Instead they choose to shoot at us and put us in jail, fight us through the courts, fight us every way they can."

May 10, 1954

MILWAUKEE, April 26—A five mile motorcade of CIO and non-CIO union militants in 1,250 placarded cars yesterday jammed Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, and surrounded the struck Kohler works where a strike of the one-year old CIO United Auto Workers Local 833 entered its 21st day. Three hundred war-veteran pickets stood in the drenching rain at the Plant's main gate to cheer the statewide labor demonstration against Wisconsin's worst industrial tyranny.

Three thousand workers of the City of Kohler, supported by the whole populace of Sheboygan County, are once again at war with the labor-hating Kohler family which has been riding high since the 1934 strike defeat. Wisconsin's Republican Governor Kohler supported McCarthy in 1952.

After 20 years of company unionism that enforced unbelievable pre-industrial union conditions, Kohler employees are striking today for the minimum rights and human conditions of work won by organized labor long ago—for seniority, bargaining rights, grievance procedures, employment security, protection on the job, end of the speed-up and a wage raise of 20 cents over the pre–World War II hourly rates.

In 1934 the bitter historic AFL strike at Kohler ended in complete annihilation for the union, the killing of two strikers, and mass evictions from Kohler-owned Kohler. Herbert Kohler, relative of the Governor, would like to do it over again. But, in the words of Robert Burkart, International UAW representative, "after 20 years of company unionism Kohler workers have more spirit than most organized workers I have seen around here."

EDITORIAL

A woman's right to choose

At the massive march on Washington to back women's right to choose, Hillary Clinton uttered the big lie of the day: a Democrat in the White House means progress for women's rights. This was repeated by the *New York Times* and other liberal media and politicians.

As the article below shows, the opposite is the case. Ever since a rising radicalization and a fundamental shift in the balance of class forces obliged the U.S. Supreme Court to hand down the *Roe v. Wade* decision decriminalizing abortion in 1973, there have been moves by federal, state, and local courts and legislative bodies that have in practice limited access to this medical procedure, especially for working-class women. Federal funding has been cut off; abortion is frequently not covered by medical plans; and numerous state governments have imposed waiting periods and parental consent provisions.

All this has been an unbroken trend from the Carter presidency in the last half of the 1970s—when the Democratic president signed the Hyde Amendment into law, the first salvo against the *Roe* ruling—through the two terms of William Clinton. At the root of this bipartisan chipping away at one of the most fundamental rights of women is the downward spiral of the capitalist system and the need of the employers to shore up their declining profit rates.

At the same time, the large majority of working people continue to support abortion rights—as the massive outpouring for the April 25 march on Washington showed—and most bourgeois politicians in both parties recognize that prospects for reversing *Roe v. Wade* are not very good now.

Young women and men committed to the fight to defend a woman's right to choose who may be swayed by Hillary Clinton's arguments and other myths perpetrated by the Democrats should seriously consider the facts presented in the article below.

Abortion was not decriminalized because of liberal, or conservative, benevolence on the high court. The 1973 decision registered what had been won in struggle by the mass civil rights movement and the rise of a women's liberation movement over decades. It cannot be taken back without big battles and a major defeat to the labor movement. It is the working class and its vanguard layers fighting to resist the bosses' offensive against our wages and standard of living today that those supporting a woman's right to choose abortion need to turn their eyes toward, not Kerry, Clinton, or any other bourgeois politician.

Ever since World War II, with the massive entry of women into the workforce, women have had a growing weight in economic and social struggles. Compelled by capitalism's whip, by its need to drive down the price of labor power, an ever-declining percentage of women are simply "invisible" producers and service providers within the home. More and more women are individual and independent actors. And this has become a worldwide trend.

The weight women's struggles for emancipation have in society today, a fact registered clearly on April 25, is a historic change that improves the odds for the working class.

Democrats' record on abortion

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

From the stage of the massive April 25 march to defend women's right to choose, Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York told the hundreds of thousands of protesters, "We didn't have to march for 12 long years because we had a government that respected the rights of women."

The record proves this a lie. In the last 30 years, the right of a woman to choose abortion and other women's rights have suffered as many blows under Democratic administrations as under Republican presidents.

In 1977 Democratic president James Carter signed into law the Hyde Amendment, the first major assault on the right to choose following the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision decriminalizing abortion. This reactionary piece of legislation shut off Medicaid funding for abortions. In the following two years 1.5 million women were unable to obtain an abortion because of a lack of facilities or an inability to pay. As a result of the Hyde Amendment, to a large degree, only 21 of the 50 U.S. states provide any funding for abortions today.

The Clinton-Gore 1992 presidential ticket's position on abortion was that it should be "safe, legal, and rare." This has been the mantra for John Kerry as well. Kerry adds that he is "personally pro-life," the term used widely by the anti-choice movement.

On the 25th anniversary of *Roe*, Gore called for pro- and anti-choice forces to "work together on a common goal: reducing the number of abortions."

During the Clinton presidency the number of U.S. counties with an abortion provider declined from 16 percent to 14 percent. Today it is 13 percent.

Under Clinton's watch, Congress in 1999 extended the Hyde Amendment to ban Medicare funding for abortions. Hillary Clinton's husband signed that into law. Medicare today covers nearly 700,000 disabled women of childbearing age, many of whom have medical conditions in which carrying a pregnancy to term could cause serious complications, or even death.

Perhaps the greatest blow Clinton delivered to women's rights was the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, in which he fulfilled his pledge to "end welfare as we know it." This eliminated Aid for Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and cut off food stamps and Medicaid for many working people. The consequences of this law are especially devastating for the 10 million women raising children on their own.

Clinton's eight-year broadside on women's rights is often papered over by those who urge support for Democrats by citing his veto of bills attempting to ban certain late-term abortion procedures. At the same time, however, these liberals never mention how Clinton used even this veto to pave the way for the future passage of such bills.

Clinton said he vetoed the bills because they did not include exceptions for when the mother's health is at risk. In December 1996, he said that if sponsors of the bill "will help me with language here and do it in good faith, I will happily sign this bill."

There is one other related myth that needs to be debunked. A number of speakers at the massive April 25 rally in Washington, D.C., said that "the next president to appoint a Supreme Court justice must be John Kerry," alleging that another high court judge appointed by a Republican president will mean the death of *Roe v. Wade.* Consider these facts, however: three of the seven judges in the Supreme Court that issued the *Roe* ruling had been appointed by Republican Richard Nixon, including Harold Blackmun who authored the majority opinion; five of the seven who formed the majority were Republican appointees; and one of the two dissenting votes in that decision was cast by a justice appointed by liberal icon John F. Kennedy.

Guantánamo prisoners appeal

Continued from front page

infringed when the trial takes place.

Last March, five prisoners were released into British custody. All but one, Jamaludeen al-Harith, were jailed on arrival in the United Kingdom. Four other British nationals remain in Guantánamo, two of whom are slated to face military tribunals, which London has criticized. At the same time, UK foreign secretary Jack Staw has defended the detentions, saying, "Valuable information has been gained, which has helped to protect the international community from further al-Qaeda and terrorist attacks."

Al-Harith told the press he was beaten, drugged, and subjected to psychological abuse. In Afghanistan, he had been a prisoner of the Taliban until U.S. forces toppled the regime. He was then taken to Guantánamo.

Three youths aged 13–15 were released in January. The Pentagon has acknowledged that other juveniles still remain locked up at Camp Delta. In total, 146 detainees have been released since the prison camp opened.

The case currently before the Supreme Court is being argued on narrow grounds: whether the Guantánamo prisoners have the right to ask a federal court to give them a hearing and whether the President can be required to provide evidence that justifies imprisonment.

The Bush administration's position is that the Guantánamo naval base is outside the jurisdiction of U.S. courts because it is on Cuban territory, although it remains there against the will of the Cuban people and government.

Attorney John Gibbons argued against this position before the court, saying that U.S. officials "assert their actions are absolutely immune from judicial examination whenever they elect to detain foreign nationals outside our borders." They "would create a lawless enclave," he said.

"The United States is at war," responded U.S. solicitor general Theodore Olsen, the government's top attorney.

This case is related to two other habeas corpus lawsuits, *Rasul v. Bush* and *al-Odah v. Rumsfeld*, filed last year by relatives of 16 prisoners who are British, Australian, and Kuwaiti residents. In January, 17 organizations including the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, filed a friend-of-the-court brief supporting the non-U.S. citizens' appeal.

On April 28 the Court will hear the cases of Yaser Esam Hamdi and José Padilla—U.S. citizens designated "enemy combatants" by Washington. Their attorneys are challenging the government's right to hold them indefinitely without charges. Until recently neither had seen a lawyer or knew they had cases before the Supreme Court.

Last July, the Bush administration declared six Guantánamo prisoners to be eligible to face what would be the first U.S. military tribunals since World War II. In early April, Lt. Cmdr. Charles Swift, a lawyer for Yemeni citizen Salim Ahmed Hamdan, who is one of the six, filed a suit charging that the planned tribunals are unconstitutional. Swift said that his client was held in solitary confinement and denied legal counsel, in order to coerce a confession. Swift says authorities told Hamdan that he would never be freed unless he confessed to unspecified crimes.

N.Y. meat packers force new vote for union election

BY DON MACKLE

BRONX, New York—Workers at the Garden Manor Farms meatpacking plant in the Hunts Point Cooperative Market won a victory in their fight for union recognition in mid-April when the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ordered the company to allow a second union representation election. The vote will take place on May 4.

"It's been a long time coming, but we are still together and this time we will win the election," said Robert Roman, a butcher at the plant. He and the 20 other workers in the plant have been fighting for more than a year to win representation by the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW).

The NLRB issued its ruling in response to a UFCW protest of company efforts to steal the August 2003 election, in which management personnel voted but a number of union supporters were denied the right to cast a ballot.

Roman said that the organizing drive began at the end of 2002 when a union veteran got hired into the plant and initiated efforts for workers to sign union recognition cards. Raffy Castillo, an organizer with UFCW Local 342 who meets daily with the Garden Manor workers, said that after the company fired the unionist, workers won an NLRB decision ordering the bosses to pay him some $4,000 back wages and offer to rehire him.

In the month before the vote for union recognition the workers struck the plant for a week to press their demands. A number of workers in nearby union meatpacking shops visited the picket line in contingents to express their solidarity.

The bosses continue to drag their feet on the election, said Castillo. "But the people in this plant are strong, they are still there and they are going to get the union in." The company list for the NLRB of those who should vote in the election included managers and office workers, he said.

Roman said that workers aren't surprised by the company's delaying tactics, pointing out that one of the owners said openly that he will do whatever is necessary to keep the union out. "The bosses have been talking to some of the newest guys hired, trying to brainwash them against the union," he said. "They even started paying one of the new guys $9 an hour when someone who has been there for years was only making $8.50."

The Hunts Point Cooperative Market complex of some 50 shops in the South Bronx has become a battlefield between the meatpacking bosses and the union. Long hours, low pay, abusive bosses, and lack of health-care benefits have prompted a layer of new, young workers—alongside a layer of veteran unionists who for various reasons now find themselves in nonunion shops—to begin taking steps to bring in the union.

Combined with the Hunts Point Produce Market just down the street, the Meat Cooperative Market covers 60 acres, constituting the world's largest wholesale food distribution center, according to the *New York Observer.* Within the next year the Fulton Fish Market, presently located in Lower Manhattan, will join the other markets, bringing in another 1,000 workers.

The vote at Garden Manor will be the third union representation election to take place there in as many months. The UFCW lost the elections in February at Nebraskaland, one of the largest shops, and at Abraham and Daughter. Another company, New York Meat, agreed to union representation for its five employees without going through the election procedure. Workers are challenging the Nebraskaland result, where the UFCW lost the election by a 44 to 32 margin.

"A number of people have come forward to tell how the company offered to pay them more money if they voted against the union or intimidated them in some other way," said Anwar Colindes, one of five workers fired during the organizing drive. Just before the February vote the NLRB ruled in favor of the dismissed workers, ordering the company to reinstate them with back pay.

Colindes is now working full-time as a Local 342 organizer. The Nebraskaland organizing drive started, he said, when "a company supervisor told me they were planning to lay off six people they said were not productive. I knew it wasn't true because I worked with these guys. So we called the union, a union representative came over and we started signing people up."

Since the election two reinstated Nebraskaland workers have been framed up and fired once again by the company.

Don Mackle is a member of UFCW Local 342 and works in the Hunts Point Meat Market.

CORRECTION

A front-page article in last week's *Militant,* "How U.S. gov't has restricted access to abortion nationwide: report from Pittsburgh," included comments by Claire Keyes, the director of the Allegheny Reproductive Health Center, on the scarcity of abortion facilities available to women living in rural Pennsylvania. The article incorrectly identified Keyes as a doctor. The error was introduced inadvertently by the editors.

Cuban doctors, literacy teachers in Venezuela

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will be among the first to staff the popular clinics," Casadiego said.

Pantoja said he was skeptical of how this will all work, given the initial challenges to Barrio Adentro faced by revolutionary-minded Venezuelan doctors in Valencia.

"But one thing is for sure," Pantoja added. "The impact of the Barrio Adentro program can now be felt across the country in most urban centers. For the first time in decades, congestion and long lines have begun to ease at emergency rooms in a number of major hospitals." This is a measurable, statistical impact, we were told by a number of Venezuelan doctors and others in Caracas, Valencia, and elsewhere.

As a result of the expanding and widespread activity of Cuban volunteers throughout the country for two years, and the growing numbers of Venezuelan students going to Cuba for three-month stints at Cuban schools, there is evidence that anticommunism and prejudices against the Cuban Revolution, which were more noticeable during an earlier *Militant* reporting trip to Venezuela in 2002, are substantially less now.

'Half the population is studying'

Cuban volunteers—numbering about 15,000 throughout the country—include agricultural specialists, physical education teachers, and trainers showing Venezuelans some of the most effective methods to eliminate illiteracy.

On the evening of March 19, some 15 students were taking part in a Mission Ribas class in the Sierra Maestra section of the January 23 neighborhood, on the hills overlooking downtown Caracas. All were workers. The oldest, Deusdedit Palacios, 54, is an auto mechanic. The youngest, Galaxo Orrellana, 23, is a cook. Most of the students were women. They included Marbani Castillo, 25, who has three children and is unemployed, and Elida Liendo, 40, a former garment worker who now does laundry at home for people in the neighborhood after losing her sewing job.

Mission Ribas is the second major literacy program that has mushroomed across the country. Its goal is to teach mathematics, geography, grammar, and English as a second language to adults who have not graduated from high school. After a preliminary course of six months, students who pass a basic test go on to the program's last phase, which lasts two years. Classes are from 6:00 to 9:00 on weekday evenings. The aim is for everyone to get a high school diploma in half the time it takes at public schools. According to government statistics, publicized in displays at a March 20 pro-government rally in Caracas, nearly 1.4 million people are currently enrolled in the program.

The aim of Mission Robinson, which preceded Mission Ribas, is to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic to 1.5 million people who are illiterate—about 12 percent of adults in this country of 24 million people. Literacy classes are taught by some 100,000 volunteers, most of them university students. The Cuban government donated more than a million TV sets, VCRs, reading glasses, and literacy manuals used in these classes. In some cases—such as the indigenous village of Mapiricure in Anzoátegui state, inhabited mostly by Cariña Indians, which *Militant* reporters visited March 24—Cuban volunteers are organizing the translation of literacy manuals into the indigenous languages. The first phase of Mission Robinson lasts three months, during which students learn the alphabet and basic arithmetic. Mission Robinson II lasts six months. Since the program started last July with substantial aid and volunteer trainers from Cuba, some 1 million people have graduated. A good number of them are now moving on to Mission Ribas classes.

Mission Sucre, which lasts for about a year, aims to prepare those with a high school diploma for entry into universities and vocational schools.

None of the workers who were at the Mission Ribas class in the Sierra Maestra on March 19 had gone through Mission Robinson classes. All said they had finished elementary school and then dropped out, or had only completed first or second grade in secondary education.

Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Mission Ribas adult literacy class in Sierra Maestra section of January 23 neighborhood, Caracas, Venezuela, March 19. On right is teacher Raisa Peña.

"I got pregnant when I was 14, that's why I dropped out of high school," said Marbani Castillo. "I have three kids now, but I decided I don't want to just stay at home." A number of other women workers gave similar reasons for quitting school at a young age.

"I decided I could do this now because the classes are right around the corner from where I live," said Naudy García, 51, an auto mechanic. "No other government in the past has made it possible for us to do such a thing."

Most workers interviewed said organizing the literacy classes within walking distance of their block has made all the difference.

Some have set their sights high, reflecting increased self-confidence. "I will finish these courses and I will go on to Mission Sucre, and I will get into medical school, and become a doctor," said Elida Liendo, the former garment worker. "I don't care if I am 40; I don't care what anybody says."

All of the students praised their teacher, Raísa Peña. "She talks to us, she helps us understands things that seem difficult, she is here every day even though she has a day job, she is motivated to do this," said Yeny Palacios.

Peña said she has a regular job at a high school and volunteered to do the classes in the evenings, especially since she lives around the corner too. There are many elementary and high school teachers doing this, she said, as well as university students and others, all on a volunteer basis.

Students who volunteered to teach Mission Robinson classes last year were promised a stipend of about $80 per month from the get-go. As most did not get paid regularly, however, thousands dropped out and did not volunteer for the second phase of the program that started last fall, *Militant* reporters were told in a number of interviews last October. The majority, however, more than 70,000, according to government statistics, did continue teaching classes on a voluntary basis.

The government has recently announced it will give a small stipend to the facilitators of Mission Ribas classes. "I won't turn it down, but that's not the reason I am doing this," Peña said. "It's an honor for me to help my neighbors improve their skills."

Until about 9:00 on weeknights, many of the households in workers districts like the January 23 neighborhood are empty or half empty. "There is a joke now that it's almost impossible to organize any neighborhood meetings during the week because of the literacy classes," said Ibis Pino, a university student whose mother was attending another Mission Ribas class that night. "Almost half of the country's population is studying now."

Some 4 million people are now involved in the country's three main literacy programs. Combined with those attending public and other regular schools, the number exceeds 10 million, we were told.

"The literacy classes and the Cuban doctors are not solving the basic economic problems we face," said José Landines, a truck driver who lives in the Sierra Maestra section of the January 23 neighborhood. "But we are in a better mood and we have more confidence we can change the situation."

Olivia Nelson and Natalie Doucet contributed to this article.

London meeting on 'What Is Surrealism?'

Continued from Page 9

ism?—Breton said that the defense of artistic freedom in the manifesto "owes more to Trotsky than to Rivera or myself.... It was Comrade Trotsky, indeed, who seeing my formulation for 'Every liberty in art, except against the proletarian revolution,' put us on guard against the new abuses that could be made of the last part of the phrase, crossing it out without hesitation."

The manifesto went on to assert that the revolutionary state has the right to defend itself against the counterattack of the bourgeoisie even when the latter is draped in the flag of science or art. "But this is the opposite of the state dictating to artists that they blow a trombone in a revolutionary fashion," Silberman said.

A lively discussion ensued.

To a woman who asked, "Why so much stress on politics?" Calder replied, "You cannot avoid politics in political times."

Another participant drew laughter from the audience when he said Lenin had only visited the Cabaret Voltaire to "demand that the surrealists keep the noise down." Silberman commented that the joke implied that the Marxist leader was uninterested in art and culture. "The opposite is the case," he said. Like Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, the founders of the communist movement, "Lenin and Trotsky held great store by culture, including the need for working people to conquer the best of bourgeois culture." These leaders of the communist movement believed that workers become richer the more access they have to literature and art. "A cultural revolution for millions of humanity is one of the objectives of a socialist revolution—and I don't mean the repressive so-called Cultural Revolution of Mao Zedong in China," said Silberman.

In answer to a man who asked if surrealist art is exhibited in Cuba, Silberman said that the Cuban Revolution and its revolutionary leadership have embraced artistic freedom of expression, and rejected the Stalinist template of socialist realism. Wilfredo Lam (1902–80), an artist of Afro-Cuban and Chinese-Cuban parentage whose striking work was embraced by Breton and others, is renowned throughout Cuba, he said. Not only are Lam's works exhibited, he said: one of Havana's major art galleries is named after him, and his centennial was widely celebrated in 2002.

The lively discussion continued into the evening. Questions and contributions covered Breton's development after World War II and contributions as a poet; the influence of surrealism today; the position of women and homosexuals in the surrealist movement; and Leon Trotsky's unwavering defense of the Soviet Union in the 1939 war with Finland and in the world war that followed.

For over a decade *What Is Surrealism?* has been unavailable in the United Kingdom. Since Pathfinder obtained the rights to distribute the book there again last October, dozens have been sold. In the last four months people have bought 39 copies, putting the book at sixth on the publisher's best-seller list in the United Kingdom.

Lawsuit on 'no-fly' list

Continued from Page 2

ACLU press release, until shortly before the ACLU in northern California filed a Freedom of Information Act request on behalf of two local anti-war activists who were told they were on such a list. The lawsuit asks the court to declare that the no-fly list violates airline passengers' constitutional right to freedom from unreasonable search and seizure and to due process under the Fourth and Fifth Amendments. It also asks the TSA to develop new guidelines to allow "innocent people to fly without being treated as potential terrorists."

The TSA acknowledges it has received more than 250 complaints from airline passengers who suspect they are on the list, the *Washington Post* reported. The *Post* reported in January that the U.S. government was taking steps to require airlines and airline reservations companies to hand over all passenger records for scrutiny. The lists would be used to assign a numerical and color-coded score ranking the perceived threat the individual supposedly poses to airline safety. Since January 5, visitors from all but 27 countries, arriving at 115 airports and 14 seaports, have been required to submit to being photographed and fingerprinted in order to enter the United States.

The TSA maintains a "selectee" list along with the no-fly list. CNN reported April 6 that those on the selectee list must go through extensive screening before boarding, while those on the no-fly list "are not allowed to board a commercial aircraft."

LETTERS

Defend fired janitors

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has vowed that it won't allow janitors simply to be tossed out. Since last December, when nine union janitors at Centre City Tower lost their jobs after building management dumped them for a nonunion, low-wage contracting company, SEIU Local 3 fears other building owners could make the same move. So the union has tried all sorts of high-minded protests to get the so-called "Centre City Nine" back to work: labor solidarity through a picket line, delegations of clergy requesting meetings with management, speeches by local politicians, even a unanimous—if nonbinding— resolution of support from Pittsburgh City Council.

Julie Mickens
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

'Pension is an insult'

What can be done to boost the miners' pension check? Thirty dollars a month is an insult. This has to be the worst pension in the world. What is the pension in soft coal? Fifty cents a ton should be received from every ton of coal dirt, slush, or any coal by-product and this money used to boost our pension.

My dad always said when he looked at a dirt bank or rock bank, "We paid for them as our pay was docked for too much dirt or too much rock; now the coal companies are reaping the harvest again."

All the miners should be paid for anything that is imported into the coal region: garbage, sewage, flyash, etc. We have to live with it.

R.R.
by e-mail

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

THE MILITANT

‘A victory for all fighting injustice’

Palestinian militant Farouk Abdel-Muhti gives interview to ‘Militant’

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

NEW YORK—“This victory is not only for me. It’s a victory for all those fighting deportation and other injustices by this government,” said Farouk Abdel-Muhti in an April 19 interview here.

The Palestinian militant won his release from prison April 12 after being locked up in immigration jails for nearly two years—including 250 days in solitary confinement—while fighting a deportation order.

Defenders of Abdel-Muhti waged a public campaign to gain his freedom and defend his right to remain in this country, where he has lived since the 1970s. They have demanded justice not only for him but for hundreds of others, mostly Middle Eastern and South Asian immigrants, who were jailed under the cover of Washington’s “war on terrorism” in the months following Sept. 11, 2001.

Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Farouk Abdel-Muhti during April 19 interview, one week after winning his release from prison.

Moved around between several immigration jails in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, he was repeatedly harassed and threatened by the prison guards and immigration cops. They failed, however, in their efforts to isolate and silence Abdel-Muhti, who continued to speak out, win international support for his fight, and carry out political work among fellow inmates.

On April 12 a federal district judge ordered his release, agreeing with his defense lawyers that he is stateless and cannot be deported in the foreseeable future.

Abdel-Muhti was born in 1947 in the Ramallah district of what is now the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Because he left the West Bank before the 1967 takeover by Tel Aviv, he cannot receive travel documents from Israel, the Palestinian Authority, or Jordan.

For years Abdel-Muhti has been active in New York as an outspoken advocate of Palestinian self-determination, as well as a defender of the Cuban Revolution. In the weeks before his April 2002 arrest by immigration cops—who said they were acting on a 1995 deportation order—he had begun a regular program on WBAI, the local station of the Pacifica radio network, arranging live interviews with Palestinians in the occupied territories.

In an interview at the *Militant* offices, Abdel-Muhti described his experiences over the past few months as he and his defenders fought for his release.

In the week before his March 30 court hearing, which was based on a habeas corpus petition by his attorneys demanding his release, Abdel-Muhti was shuttled between prisons—from Hudson County, New Jersey, to Philadelphia to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

“In the Hudson County jail the guards told me, ‘Pack up and leave everything here,’” said Abdel-Muhti. “I told the other man in my cell, ‘Take care of my documents.’ I knew they would be safe with him because he had been part of the hunger strike with me.” Abdel-Muhti and five other prisoners carried out a hunger strike in January 2003 at the Passaic County Jail in Paterson, New Jersey. Like Abdel-Muhti, the five men—among those who were swept up by police across the country after Sept. 11, 2001—were being held without charges. The hunger strikers put out a statement calling for “the release of all detainees who are accused of no crimes, and of all detainees who have served their terms.”

A few days after the court hearing in Harrisburg, Abdel-Muhti was whisked away by immigration cops to the federal prison in Atlanta. They did this without the knowledge of his attorneys and in spite of an order “to immediately return the said Farouk Abdel-Muhti to Hudson County Jail,” his defense committee reports.

“I was put on an Air Santo Domingo plane with 180 prisoners,” said Abdel-Muhti. “The U.S. government had seized this plane from those it accused of drug running, and it is now using it to move prisoners around and prepare others for deportation.”

When he arrived at the Atlanta prison, the authorities repeatedly misspelled Abdel-Muhti’s name in their documents. “At one time ‘Farouk’ became ‘Frank,’” he said, and “Abdel” became “Abel.” He worried that the jailers might get him “lost” in the system. In fact, government officials have cynically accused *him* of trying to hide his identity in an attempt to remain in the United States.

The Palestinian revolutionary was held in 23-hour lock-up from the time he arrived in Atlanta—“I had no documents, no stamps, no envelopes.” It was not until four days later that he was able to make a five-minute phone call. On April 8, the day before, U.S. district Judge Yvette Kane had given immigration authorities 10 days to release him.

In Abdel-Muhti’s brief call to defense committee leader David Wilson, he found out for the first time, “You won the case! You won the case!”

The conditions of his release include reporting regularly to immigration officers.

The government has not given up in its attempt to deport him. Two days after his release, Department of Homeland Security spokesperson Bill Strassberger told the *Philadelphia Enquirer* that a U.S. agreement with the Israeli government may open up Abdel-Muhti to deportation to that country. “I would predict his stay in the U.S. is coming to a close,” the immigration cop asserted.

“I don’t believe the judge released me because she is progressive-minded, but because she felt she had to. We had justice on our side,” Abdel-Muhti said. “You can use the Bill of Rights as a weapon.”

Political discussions in prison

While his defenders were putting heat on government authorities, from the other side of the prison bars Abdel-Muhti engaged in political discussions and classes with those locked up with him.

In prison Abdel-Muhti received a number of publications, including the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. He became known as a source of information and someone to exchange political ideas with.

“*Marielitos* wanted to know about what was going on in Cuba,” he said, referring to Cubans who came to the United States during a wave of immigration through the Cuban port of Mariel in 1980. “Some were supporters of the revolution, while others just wanted to get information about Cuba.” At that time, the Carter administration “welcomed” these Cubans by locking up thousands of them. Many were later released, but some were subsequently rearrested and are being held indefinitely as “excludable.”

“We organized study classes,” said Abdel-Muhti. “We read articles from the papers and discussed them. In the classes were men from many countries—from Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Cape Verde, Brazil, Guyana, and more.” As many as 15 prisoners participated in the classes, which were held in English and Spanish. Abdel-Muhti is fluent in both languages.

Among the popular topics of discussion were the struggle in Venezuela against the U.S.-backed efforts by capitalist forces there to remove President Hugo Chávez, and the union-organizing struggle by coal miners at the Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah.

In January of this year, he and 19 other inmates at the Hudson County Jail co-signed a letter of solidarity to the miners in Utah, who have been on strike since September 2003 to win recognition of their union, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

In their letter, the 20 prisoners wrote, “The right to organize into the UMWA is…a natural right of humanity; the bosses are still living in the epoch of cave-dwellers, and we are obliged to wake them up to reality.”

“We sat down together, and there was no disagreement on what to say,” said Abdel-Muhti. “One of the signers, Abdul Hamid, had experience in the union movement in Colombia, and worked with the others to write the letter.”

“I was glad to see that when the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* wrote about my case, they also mentioned others who have been under attack by the U.S. government, including Sami Al-Arian and the Cuban Five,” said the Palestinian militant.

Al-Arian is a defender of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination who was a professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa prior to his arrest in February 2003 on “conspiracy” charges of belonging to a “terrorist” organization.

The Cuban Five are Cuban revolutionaries who have been locked up in U.S. prisons since 2001 on phony “conspiracy” charges. The five had been gathering information on ultrarightist Cuban-American groups that have organized violent attacks on Cuba from U.S. territory with the complicity of the U.S. government. “They are not spies,” said Abdel-Muhti, “but were defending their country against attacks from the government of the United States, which hates the Cuban Revolution.”

Abdel-Muhti has no intention of allowing the immigration cops to shut him up. He has returned to his regular radio program in New York and has already spoken out on his continuing fight against deportation, and the Palestinian struggle, at a number of events.

Róger Calero contributed to this article.

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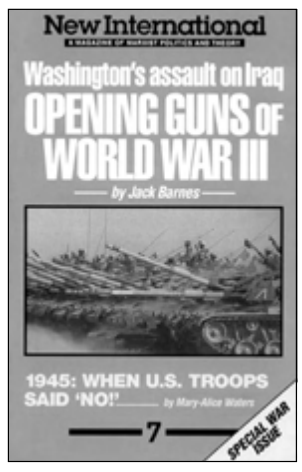

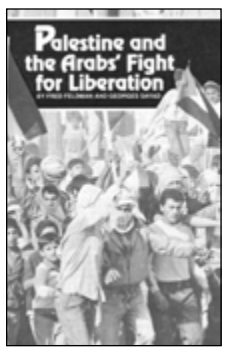

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